Police Service of Northern Ireland

User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland

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Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency

Keeping People Safe

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1 Introduction

The Police Service of Northern Ireland publishes figures on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data. An alternative but complementary measure of crime, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS), is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland. Each source of crime information has different strengths and limitations but can be looked at together to provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone.

Detail around the need for both recorded crime figures and the NICS can be found in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of the bulletin Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2013/14 Northern Ireland Crime Survey. Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

Since April 2012 police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales, along with the Crime survey for England and Wales, have been published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Prior to that police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales were published by the Home Office. Statistics on crime detections or outcomes in England and Wales are still made available by the Home Office. Crimes recorded and cleared up by the police in Scotland are available through The Scottish Government internet site. In Ireland, recorded crime figures are published by the Central Statistics Office. Background information on recording practices, definitions and classifications are available on each of these internet sites.

Police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland are published throughout the year as monthly updates providing a summary of the latest statistics, these statistics being provisional and subject to revision. The monthly update published in May of each year provides finalised figures for the latest financial year along with trends and commentary. A more detailed trends bulletin is then published in July of each year.

This User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland is designed to be a useful reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of these crime statistics.

The exact publication date for the May bulletin is pre-announced and can be found via the UK National Statistics Publication Hub. It is also made available via the Police Service of Northern Ireland Internet site, along with the date of each monthly update: Crime publication schedule.

Copies of PSNI statistical bulletins on recorded crime are available from the PSNI Internet site crime statistics page, which also provides access to the latest monthly updates.

Previously published annual reports for the financial years dating back to 2002/03 are available in the Crime Statistics Archive on the PSNI Internet site. In addition, this archive also contains scanned images of relevant crime tables from each annual Report of the Chief Constable, in calendar year format from 1968 until 1997 and in financial year format (April to March) from 1997/98 to 2001/02. Caution should be taken when looking at previously published reports as there will have been changes and improvements in crime recording practices and systems over time, and also changes in crime classifications and categories. During 2010/11 an exercise was undertaken to more closely align the crime recording classifications used in PSNI publications with those in use within England and Wales. All PSNI crime figures published from 2011/12 onwards are based on this realigned classification.

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided below.

For further information about the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland, or to contact the PSNI Crime Statistician please:

Email: statistics@psni.police.uk;

Write to: Statistics Branch, Lisnasharragh, 42 Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9LD; or

Telephone: 028 9065 0222 ext 24135, Fax 028 9092 2998

Information on the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, including past publications and future publication schedules, can be found via:

- The UK National Statistics Publication Hub;
- The Department of Justice for Northern Ireland Internet site; and
- The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's Central Survey Unit Internet site;

By emailing: statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk; or
By writing to: Department of Justice Statistics and Research Branch, Massey House, Stormont Estate, BELFAST, BT4 3SX

2 Police recorded crime

2.1 Introduction to police recorded crime
2.2 Comparison of Police Recorded Crime Statistics and Northern Ireland Crime Survey
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2.1 Introduction to police recorded crime

Police recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to the Police Service of Northern Ireland from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, working to the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

What is a recorded crime: Recorded crime data are based on an aggregated count of each crime within the notifiable offence list (see Appendix 1). Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by jury (these include some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with this way) plus a few additional closely related offences, such as assault without injury. Crime recording is governed by the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR); further details on these are available in 2.4 Crime Recording Practices. Information on recorded crime outcomes is collected in the same way. Further details on crime outcomes are provided in Section 2.6 Outcomes.

What is an incident: All incidents reported to the police are recorded in accordance with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR), which sets out a common approach to be followed in classifying the broad range of calls for service the police receive from the general public. In many cases these incidents may be crimes in law, such as disorderly behaviour or many road traffic offences, but they are not of a level of severity that would result in the recording of a notifiable crime (as described above). Thus, they are not included in the main police recorded crime dataset.

Annual crime data are published on a financial year basis and provisional recorded crime data are published each month on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis.

Recorded crime figures are an important indicator of police workload, and can be used for local crime pattern analysis and provide a good measure of trends in well-reported crimes (in particular, homicide, which is not covered by the NICS). There are also some categories of crime (such as drug possession offences) where the volume of offences recorded are heavily influenced by police activities and priorities; in such cases recorded crime figures may not provide an accurate picture of the true extent of criminality.

Recorded crime figures are used widely within PSNI as management information, to monitor performance on crime and detection rate targets against the Policing Plan, to inform PSNI policy and to provide information in support of operational research identifying appropriate allocation of police resource. The figures are also used by the Northern Ireland Policing Board and at local level by Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) to monitor the performance of the police. The Department of Justice for Northern Ireland is a key user of crime figures in relation to policy development.

Recorded crime figures are also used in response to both Assembly and Parliamentary questions, informing public debate and concerns around criminal activity. Information is used by academic researchers and the media, examining local and national public interest in current affairs relating to crime levels. There is a demand for crime figures from businesses, either keen to identify crimes that may affect their business or to identify demand for any related business service they may provide. Members of the public would also forward requests for crime information specific to their area of interest or specific to the area in which they live or work.

2.2 Comparison of Police Recorded Crime Statistics and Northern Ireland Crime Survey

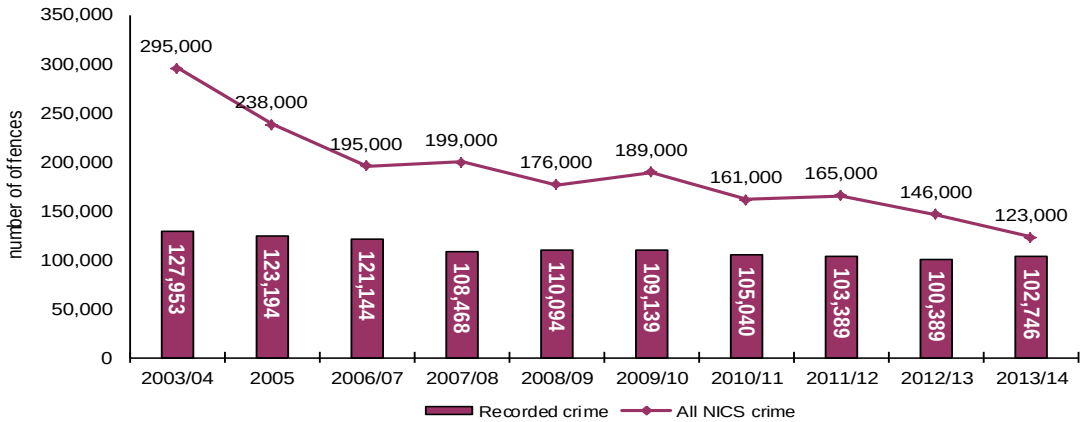
Strengths and limitations: There is an alternative but complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime. This is the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) which is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (DoJ). Each source of crime information has different strengths and limitations but can be looked at together to provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone. Details around the need for both recorded crime figures and the NICS can be found in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of the bulletin Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2013/14 Northern Ireland Crime Survey. Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

Unlike the NICS, police recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or those that the police decide not to record, but they do cover crimes against those aged under 16, organisations such as businesses, and crimes 'against the state' i.e. with no immediate victim (e.g. possession of drugs). It was estimated in 2013/14 that around 46 per cent of NICS comparable crime was reported to the police in Northern Ireland although this varied for individual offence types. Further information on crime reporting rates in Northern Ireland and England and Wales is provided in Section 4 of the bulletin Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2013/14 Northern Ireland Crime Survey. Findings from previous surveys estimate the proportion of NICS comparable crime reported to the police was 52% in 2012/13, 44% in 2011/12 and 2010/11, 50% in 2009/10, 46% in 2008/09, 48% in 2007/08, 51% in 2006/07, 39% in 2005, 45% in 2003/04 and 54% in 2001.

Like any administrative data, police recorded crime statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. These issues need to be taken into account when using these data.

Comparison of police recorded crime and NICS: Figure 2.1 compares trends in police recorded crime and levels identified through the NICS. The level of recorded crime can be affected by changes in both reporting and recording practices, while data collected through the NICS are unaffected by these issues. Since 2003/04 the NICS estimates have been based on a rolling 12 month recall period (ie the full calendar year preceding interview) which effectively covers a spread of 23 months in a single NICS year. This makes it difficult to directly compare the NICS figures with any specific set of annual recorded crime figures and should be taken into account when examining Figure 2.1. The crime reporting rates described above (52 per cent of NICS comparable crime being reported to the police in 2012/13) may in part explain the gap between NICS and police recorded crime levels.

Figure 2.1 Trends in recorded crime and all NICS Crime 2003/04 to 2013/14



Further information on the NICS, such as the background, methodology and analysis, is available from the NICS User Guide on the Department of Justice Northern Ireland Internet site.

Comparison of trends using comparable subset of crime: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a methodological note on Analysis of variation in crime trends in January 2013 (available on the ONS internet site at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/crime-statistics-methodology/methodological-notes/index.html). This work identified a divergence in the trends between the Crime Survey for England & Wales (CSEW) and the Police Recorded Crime figures in England & Wales, with the police recorded crime figures showing larger falls in crime. It was indicated that a possible hypothesis was that there was a gradual erosion of compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard, such that a growing number of crimes reported to the police were no longer being captured in crime recording systems. Updated analysis is available in the User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales (July 2014),

available through the ONS internet site at http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/crime-statistics-methodology/user-guides/index.html.

PSNI worked with the NISRA statisticians in the Department of Justice Northern Ireland to replicate the methodology from the ONS report published in January 2013 to create a comparable subset of police recorded crime and NICS crime and conduct a similar analysis. The preliminary findings in May 2013 indicated that the trend identified by ONS was not reflected in Northern Ireland. If anything, the opposite appeared to be the case with the NICS showing crime dropping at a greater rate than the police recorded crime statistics. Table 1 below shows the findings for the Northern Ireland figures, as well as the latest findings from England & Wales.

Please note: the England & Wales figures represent different time periods to those for Northern Ireland. As there was no NICS conducted in 2002/03 comparisons were made with 2003/04. In addition, England & Wales have updated their analysis and time periods used, and have slightly revised the methodology used to recently calculate the number of crimes in the comparable sub-set. The Northern Ireland figures are based on the previous methodology and NICS figures for 2013/14 were not available at the time of preparing the tables.

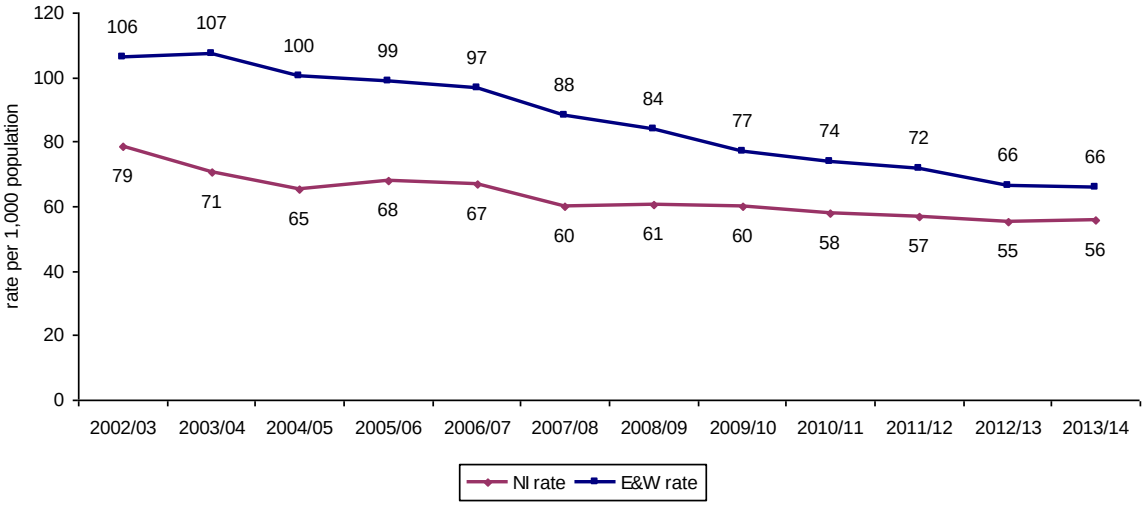
Table 2.1: Comparison on changes in crime levels measured by police recorded crime and by the crime survey; England & Wales and Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland comparable subsets of crime	2003/04	2006/07	2011/12	2012/13	% change 2003/04 – 2006/07	% change 2006/07 – 2011/12	% change 2011/12 – 2012/13	% change 2003/04 – 2012/13
Police Recorded Crime	75,401	70,423	56,660	54,717	-7	-20	-3	-27
NICS Crime	100,000	72,000	52,000	54,000	-28	-28	4	-46

England & Wales comparable subsets of crime	2002/03	2007/08	2012/13	2013/14	% change 2002/03 – 2007/08	% change 2007/08 – 2012/13	% change 2012/13 – 2013/14	% change 2002/03 – 2013/14
Police Recorded Crime	3,229,842	2,574,973	1,761,997	1,722,671	-20	-32	-2	-47
CSEW Crimes (reported to police)	3,668,905	3,072,780	2,478,062	2,126,204	-16	-19	-14	-42

Taking into account the differing time periods and slight change in methodology in England & Wales, the differing picture when comparing the trends in England & Wales with those in Northern Ireland can clearly be seen. Northern Ireland police recorded crime has not been showing the same scale of decreasing levels as either the NICS or the police recorded crime in England & Wales. Similarly police recorded crime trends based on rates per 1,000 population indicate that levels for many of the main offence types have fallen at a slower rate in Northern Ireland than in England & Wales, as shown in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Overall crime rates per 1,000 population; England & Wales and Northern Ireland



2.3 User needs and user consultation

The PSNI is required under Principle 1 (Meeting user needs) of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, to publish information about users' experiences of statistical services, data quality and the format and timing of reports. Any interaction with key users of PSNI statistics usually falls into one of the three groups highlighted below:

1. Engagement with users through regular user group meetings or correspondence– these are held with key users throughout the year and normally involve PSNI statisticians and policy & statistical colleagues in other NI government departments or in other criminal justice agencies but do also involve external interest groups.
2. User Surveys – we occasionally survey the key users of our statistics to ascertain what they think about the service they receive. The most recent User Survey was conducted in May 2014, with a previous survey conducted in October/November 2011.
3. Consultation exercises regarding proposed changes to statistical outputs or processes – this is where a wide range of users are consulted by PSNI Statistics Branch in advance of any planned changes to the statistics we report on.

The PSNI internet site provides information on each of the types of interaction listed above on its Official Statistics webpage. Also available on this webpage is the PSNI user engagement strategy and comments and feedback from interactions with users.

2.3.1 Key users of PSNI recorded crime statistics

The key users of the PSNI's crime statistics fall into three main categories;

1. Internal PSNI – Officers and staff within PSNI rely on the crime statistics to track changing trends in crime and to deploy resources accordingly. They also use these to monitor their performance against various targets in the N Ireland Policing Plan.
2. Oversight bodies & Government - The N Ireland Policing Board monitors the PSNI's performance against these policing plan targets and to assess the PSNIs success at addressing key agreed policing priorities. The Dept. of Justice also uses PSNI crime statistics for monitoring the achievement of a violent crime reduction target in the NI Executive's Programme for Government. They also use the crime statistics to inform policy making to monitor policy effectiveness.
3. The wider general public, academia and specific interest groups all use the PSNI's crime statistics to inform them about crime trends that they are interested in.

2.3.2 Uses Made of PSNI's Crime Statistics

Based on our experience, knowledge & awareness of existing uses of the statistics and on the responses to the PSNI's Crime Statistics User Surveys, the following examples should provide an insight to the main uses made of PSNI's crime statistics.

Policy making/policy monitoring

- The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (PfG) highlights the main priority work areas to be addressed by the various NI departments during the 2011-2015 period. Within this, under Priority 3: Protecting our people, the environment and creating safer communities, the PfG commitment no. 54 is 'To reduce the level of Serious Crime'. PSNI crime statistics on the levels of non-domestic violence with injury offences are used to monitor progress towards achieving this objective. These are provided to Department of Justice policy colleagues on a monthly basis.
- The Department of Justice uses the PSNI's crime statistics to inform policy development and to monitor and track their effectiveness over time. They have a specific interest in the more serious offences such as violence against the person & sexual offences as per the PfG commitment previously mentioned. In addition, the Department of Justice also has an interest in offences against vulnerable groups such as the elderly, victims of domestic abuse and victims of hate crime. As a result we have over the years developed a series of crime statistics reports that address these needs for example we now provide a range of crime statistics by age of victim, enabling users to readily track trends in crimes against the elderly and in the associated outcome rates.
- The Northern Ireland Department of Health and Personal Safety use the PSNI's crime statistics to help inform and develop policy on the extent of alcohol related crime with a particular interest in licensing regulations and also the cost of alcohol related problems to the Health Service in Northern Ireland.
- The Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency has used PSNI crime statistics in compiling its measure of multiple deprivation for Northern Ireland. A range of various offence types sourced from PSNI crime statistics are included in the crime domain of the NI multiple deprivation measure. This is combined with information from other sources (eg NI crime survey & NI Fire Service), which make up the overall crime domain measure.

- The Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency makes PSNI crime statistics available at a range of different geographies through its Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System (NINIS). This enables users of the PSNI's crime statistics to access the information at geographies not readily available from the PSNI website and to use the NINIS interactive mapping facility to analyse the information.
- Various local and national special interest groups or voluntary organisations have a particular interest in the crime statistics that relate to their policy area. They would be in contact with PSNI's Statistics Branch on a regular basis and would have specific 'one off' requests for detailed crime statistics that we would provide. These special interest groups or voluntary groups would then use this information to publish detailed reports on the extent of particular crime types in Northern Ireland and would use this with Northern Ireland government departments to lobby for policy or legislative change.

Performance monitoring/effectiveness of policing

- The PSNI and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) have an annual policing plan which contains a variety of quantitative targets by which the NIPB use to monitor the PSNI's effectiveness. A number of these targets are based on PSNI's recorded crime statistics. The overall policing plan is then replicated across each of the PSNI's 29 policing Areas which work in collaboration with local Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs). Again these local policing plans would also contain a variety of targets based on PSNI's crime statistics. As a result, the crime statistics are extensively used both within PSNI and also within NIPB and local PCSPs to monitor policing performance
- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) conducts annual inspections of PSNI and a key part of their 'Value for Money' evaluation generally involves comparing PSNI crime statistics with those in other forces in England & Wales, especially with those forces deemed to be within the PSNI's Most Similar Group (i.e. those other police forces thought to be most comparable to PSNI). They combine the PSNI's crime statistics with other data sources and compare levels of crimes per 1,000 population or would compare the level of recorded crime per number of frontline officers etc. to inform their assessment of the PSNI's effectiveness.
- The Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) would also occasionally use PSNI crime statistics to monitor the performance and effectiveness of PSNI in some of their inspections. Again, they would tend to use this information to (i) identify levels of demand within PSNI and (ii) to compare PSNI performance against other police forces.

National Media related & informing public/public interest

- The local media use the PSNI's crime statistics to inform the public on relevant trends in crime. Because of the nature of their work, they tend to require the relevant information at relatively short notice in order to support/inform emerging stories. If the information isn't readily available, we will try our best to provide something that will assist. In the past the local media have focused on crimes against the elderly, agriculture related crime, metal theft, car hijackings and detection rates for paramilitary style attacks and many other aspects.
- PSNI Statistics Branch receives a high number of FOI requests for information relating to crime statistics and the numbers of these requests have been increasing year on year. The sort of queries we get asked vary considerably from something very specific and localised (eg. details of every incident at a particular address) to more generic requests that are sent to all police forces in the UK. The FOI requests are anonymous, but we are fairly certain that many are media related (both national and local) – as when the article is later published we can usually source the figures quoted to a past FOI response.
- PSNI crime statistics are made available on a monthly basis via the national Crimemapper website which plots these on an interactive map down to low level geographies (i.e. areas containing 7 households). Users enter the postcode or name of the area they are interested in and the map then displays the location of any crimes recorded in that area for the most recent month. Users can also download the data for analysis & mapping on their own software packages – enabling secondary use of the data. We have anecdotal feedback on some PCSPs finding this information useful as well as local neighbourhood watch schemes. Prospective house buyers also use the information if they are interested in moving to a new area.

To facilitate academic research

- PSNI Statistics Branch receives a number of requests for crime data to assist with academic research projects. If the data is not readily available or cannot be released at the required level of disaggregation, we look to see if we can share the information through having a data sharing agreement.

To inform public marketing campaigns

- The PSNI has used its crime statistics in the past to make the public aware of levels of crime in their area. There have been campaigns where billboards and poster sites were used across N Ireland to highlight levels of specific crimes in the local area.

In support of local community policing needs

- Local Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) may access the PSNI's crime statistics and undertake detailed analyses to identify changing or emerging crime trends in their local area. They will then use this to inform their PCSP representatives so that they are in a position to challenge the local police commander about any relevant issues.

To aid decisions on resource allocation

- Some agencies and special interest groups are dependent on funding that is sometimes linked to crime levels in their area. Hence these groups are keen to be provided with details of specific crime types within their area of concern. Often these are at low levels of geography or perhaps for very local areas which are non-standard geographies.

Commercial interests

- Occasionally we get requests for PSNI crime statistics that would have a commercial interest e.g. relating to insurance companies. However, since a lot of information is now readily available in downloadable format from the Crimemapper website, it means that we get fewer such requests from those with commercial interests.

Personal interest

- We get requests for crime statistics from individuals who have a personal interest in a particular area.

2.3.3 User survey 2014

Feedback received during our most recent customer survey conducted in May 2014 would indicate that the vast majority of users find our crime statistics to meet their needs (98% say they fully/most meet their needs). This combined with fact that we generally get very few requests for improvements or changes to our statistical reports from key users would indicate that our statistics generally meet users' needs.

The majority of users of the PSNI's crime statistics reported that they use the statistics for performance monitoring / effectiveness of policing purposes (71%). The second most common use was for policy making / policy monitoring reasons (47%) followed by media related / informing the public / public interest reasons (31%), to aid decisions on resource allocation (29% and in support of local community policing needs (27%).

The majority of users who reported performance monitoring / effectiveness of policing being their main use of the crime statistics were internal PSNI officers & staff. In contrast, the majority of the persons who indicated that they used the statistics for policy making and policy monitoring purposes were external respondents (those outside PSNI).

2.4 Crime recording practices

Recorded crime statistics are affected by changes in reporting and recording practices. To ensure consistency, police recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). These rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces in England and Wales. Although the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Home Office, the same recording practices are followed and applied within Northern Ireland. However differences in legislation between the two jurisdictions must be taken into account when making comparisons between police recorded crime statistics for England & Wales and those for Northern Ireland. Details of the relevant guidance are available through a two-page NCRS fact sheet and the Home Office Counting Rules.

There have been two major changes to the recording of crimes in recent years: in April 1998 the HOCR for Recorded Crime were expanded to include certain additional summary offences and counts became more victim-based (the number of victims was counted rather than the number of offences); in April 2002, the NCRS was introduced across England & Wales and Northern Ireland, although some forces adopted key elements of the standard earlier and compliance with the standard continued to improve in the years following its formal introduction. In April 2001, a year prior to the introduction of the NCRS, the Police Service of Northern Ireland introduced a new crime recording system (Integrated Crime Information System or 'ICIS') which improved data collection and coverage. As a result more low level crime was identified and included within the recorded crime statistics and the subsequent introduction of NCRS in April 2002 did not have a large impact.

The NCRS was devised by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in collaboration with Home Office statisticians. It was designed to ensure greater consistency between forces in recording crime and to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording with the police being required to record any allegation of crime unless there was credible evidence to the contrary (Simmons *et al.*, 2003).

Both of these changes resulted in an increase in the number of crimes recorded. Certain offences, such as the more minor violent crimes, were more affected by these changes than others. All of these factors need to be considered when looking at the trends in recorded crime.

Ongoing consultation on the formulation and development of the policy on crime recording is provided through working groups comprising members of the Home Office, ONS, police force regional representatives and representatives of ACPO, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Any significant changes proposed by these groups in recording will be considered by the independent Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC) – established following a recommendation in the National Statistician's review of crime statistics in 2011 – who will advise the Home Secretary and ONS before any final changes are made.

Police recorded crime statistics, like any administrative data, will be affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. Therefore, when examining trends in police recorded crime data presented in statistical bulletins it is important to read the commentary which will explain any caveats associated with the data.

2.5 Changes to recorded crime classifications

On occasion, the structure of the classifications used to compile recorded crime may change.

Alignment of PSNI classifications with England and Wales: During 2010/11 an exercise was conducted to more closely align the crime recording classifications used in PSNI publications with those used for police recorded crime figures in England and Wales. The aim of this exercise was to improve comparability of police recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland with those for England and Wales, while taking into account legislative differences between the two jurisdictions. The realigned crime classification was introduced within PSNI in April 2011.

Crime classifications consultation November 2011: In November 2011 PSNI's Statistics Branch ran a consultation exercise about proposed changes to reduce the overall number of crime classifications. This was in line with a similar exercise conducted by the Home Office in England and Wales. This resulted in a reduction in the number of crime classifications from 148 to 126 and these changes which were introduced in April 2012.

Crime classifications consultation December 2012: The focus of the consultation launched in December 2012 concerned the presentation of police recorded crime under two broad categories – 'victim-based crime' and 'other crimes against society' in order to improve clarity of presentation. This consultation followed a similar exercise conducted by ONS in respect of police recorded crime in England and Wales. This resulted in a change to the previous classification system implemented from 1st April 2013. The recorded crime list in Appendix 1 has been updated to reflect the revised classifications. All police recorded crime figures published from June 2013 onwards will be based on this revised classification, including the bulletin Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2012/13 due to be published in early July 2013.

2.6 Crime outcomes

A revised framework for recorded crime outcomes was developed by the Home Office, following a consultation launched in October 2012. While this framework was introduced in police forces in England & Wales from 1st April 2014, it will not be introduced within PSNI until April 2015. This framework covers a range of 19 possible outcomes, further details of which can be found in the General Rules Section H of the Home Office Counting Rules.

Outcome type 1 : A person has been charged or summonsed for the crime (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at Court)
Outcome type 2: A youth offender has been cautioned by the police
Outcome type 3: An adult offender has been cautioned by the police
Outcome type 4: The offender admits the crime by way of a PACE compliant interview and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court
Outcome type 5: The offender has died
Outcome type 6: A penalty notice for disorder (or other relevant notifiable offence) has been lawfully issued
Outcome type 7: A warning for cannabis possession has been issued
Outcome type 8: A community resolution (with or without formal restorative justice) has been applied
Outcome type 9: Prosecution not in the public interest
Outcome type 10: Formal action against the offender is not in the public interest (police decision)

Outcome type 11: Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is below the age of criminal responsibility
Outcome type 12: Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute
Outcome type 13: Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but victim or key witness is dead or too ill to give evidence
Outcome type 14: Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect not identified
Outcome type 15: Evidential difficulties named suspect identified
Outcome type 16: Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified
Outcome type 17: Prosecution time limit expired
Outcome type 18: Investigation complete – no suspect identified
Outcome type 19: National Fraud Intelligence Bureau Filed (Fraud only).

The above framework, as it will apply within Northern Ireland, will be available once the new outcome types are adopted by PSNI. A more detailed explanation of the current crime outcomes in place within Northern Ireland is provided below, along with details of changes to the recording of these outcomes and impact on the data series.

Overview of existing crime outcomes

For an outcome to be assigned to a recorded crime the following basic principles must apply:

- a notifiable offence has been committed and recorded;
- a suspect has been identified and has been made aware that they will be recorded as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are; and
- one of the following outcome types applies
  - charge or summons
  - caution
  - offence taken into consideration
  - youth conference
  - penalty notice for disorder
  - the offence is 'indictable only' and the case cannot proceed because the offender has died or because the Public Prosecution Service decides not to prosecute
  - discretionary disposal

Once an outcome has been claimed, any identifiable victim must be informed of the outcome, or in the case of a child, their parent or guardian must be informed unless it is not in the interest of the victim to do so.

Outcomes are counted on the basis of crimes rather than offenders. For example, if six offenders are involved in a robbery and all are arrested and charged, then this counts as one outcome. Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and at large, this also counts as one outcome for the robbery.

Further information on outcomes can be found in Section H of the general Home Office Counting Rules.

Please note that the terminology and processes in these rules refer to what is in place in England and Wales (e.g. for Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales, replace with Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland). There will be differences between the criminal justice processes outlined in the outcomes section of Counting Rules and those that are in place within Northern Ireland.

Outcomes where the offender receives a formal sanction

These outcomes were previously known as sanction detections and include offences which are cleared up through a formal sanction to the offender. Not all such outcomes will necessarily result in a subsequent conviction. In cases dealt with by 'charge/summons', the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) may decide not to take forward proceedings or the offender might be found not guilty.

This type of outcome can be claimed when an offender has been dealt with in one of the ways listed below.

- **Charged or summonsed:** a person has been charged or summonsed for the crime (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at Court).
- **Cautioned:** The offender has been cautioned by the police. A caution may be administered after PPS direction or consultation with PPS when an offender admits guilt, where there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and where the offender consents to the caution being issued.
- **Had an offence taken into consideration: T**he offender admits the crime and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court and where there is additional verifiable information linking that offender to the crime.

- **Youth conference:** Where the defendant is a youth, PPS may consider a diversionary youth conference as an alternative to prosecution in court, when an offender admits guilt and agrees to accept and participate in this diversionary option. This type of restorative conference may involve a number of parties including the defendant, the victim and police. A plan will be produced by this conference which must be approved by the PPS. A Youth Conference is a formal process and, although not a conviction, is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 30 months[1].
- **Received a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND): T**he police issue a penalty notice for disorder. Such a notice must be issued in accordance with any operational to the police. An outcome is counted if the penalty notice is not contested, is contested but the PPS proceeds with the case, or, in discontinued cases, the original decision is retained after review. While PNDs were introduced in England & Wales in 2005, they were only introduced within Northern Ireland in June 2012.

Warnings for Cannabis Possession are a separately identifiable crime outcome within England & Wales. In Northern Ireland, outcomes in relation to Cannabis Possession will be included within the available outcome methods listed above.

Discretionary disposals

A discretionary disposal can be considered by a police officer for crimes that are comparatively minor by virtue of impact and/or seriousness and where the victim and offender agree on a suitable form of reparation such as an apology. Such a disposal provides a prompt means of disposing of a crime that is victim led and does not involve the formality of other disposal methods. PSNI introduced discretionary disposals during 2011/12. From April 2013 they are included in the wider outcomes framework.

Outcomes where no further action is taken against the offender

These outcome methods comprise those where the offence is counted as cleared up but no further action was taken against the offender. Prior to April 2007 various reasons were allowed for claiming outcomes of this type, including where the:

- offender, victim or essential witness is dead or too ill;
- victim refuses or is unable to give evidence;
- offender is under the age of criminal responsibility;
- police or the PPS decide that it would not be in the public interest to proceed; and
- time limit of six months for commencing prosecution has been exceeded.

From April 2007, this type of outcome may only be claimed in the following circumstances:

- Where the offence is an 'indictable only'[2] offence and the case cannot proceed because the offender has died;
- Where the offence is other than indictable only but has been classified in HOCR sexual offences and was recorded as a result of crimes reported on or after April 1st 2012 and the investigation cannot proceed because the offender has died;
- Where the offence is 'indictable only' and the PPS decides not to prosecute (through application of the public interest test)[3].

2.7 Changes to crime outcome figures

There have been a number of changes to recording practices and the sanctions available that have affected the recorded crime outcome figures and their presentation within Northern Ireland.

Terminology – detection rates and outcomes

Up to 2012/13 the term detections was used to describe outcomes, which were split into sanction detections (those where the offender receives a formal sanction) and non sanction detections (those where no further action is taken against the offender). Detections were presented in the form of a detection rate, the number of detections recorded in a given year expressed as a percentage of the total number of crimes recorded in the same period.

Presentation of 'detection rates': Changes to disposal methods over the years meant that, until 2012/13, the sanction detection rate was the only means of presenting a comparable and consistent data series.

[1] Taken from para 4.6.1 of the PPSNI Code for Prosecutors

[2] Indictable only are those offences which must be tried in a Crown Court

[3] Details can be found in section 4.3 of the PPSNI Code for Prosecutors

Presentation of rates for outcomes: With the addition of discretionary disposals from April 2013 and in anticipation of the new Home Office framework, the terminology of 'outcome' was adopted for presentational purposes from April 2013, with the outcome rate comprising all current crime outcome methods available within PSNI. Most of the outcome figures in bulletins published from 2013/14 onwards will be shown dating back to 2007/08 in order to provide a data series that is as comparable as possible, bearing in mind that discretionary disposals were first introduced as an outcome method during 2011/12 and penalty notices for disorder were introduced in June 2012.

Changes to outcomes since April 1998

April 1998: The Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime changed from April 1998. These brought new offences into the series with varying detection rates.

April 2002: The implementation of the NCRS in April 2002 is thought to have had an inflationary effect on recorded crime and the assumption is that it depressed detection rates since those offences added to the data series are generally less serious and possibly harder to detect. Northern Ireland experienced a drop in the overall detection rate of 7 percentage points between 2000/01 and 2001/02, most likely due to the introduction of the ICIS system within PSNI (as described in 2.2 Recording Practices). The introduction of NCRS in April 2002 did not then have any additional impact on the overall detection rate.

April 2003: Prior to 1st April 2003 it was permissible to claim a detection where "inflammatory consequences" prevented interviewing the suspect or informing them of the detection. This option was removed by the Home Office from 1st April 2003, stating that in such cases the crime should remain undetected. Within Northern Ireland there was a greater reliance on detecting crimes in circumstances where speaking to the suspect could 'inflame' the situation resulting in the complainant being threatened or harmed or of further offences being committed against them. For these reasons Northern Ireland was allowed to continue claiming detections in these circumstances while the Home Office considered PSNI's position. While the Home Office indicated that exceptions to this ruling could be considered in relation to paramilitary offences, PSNI agreed to stop the use of 'inflammatory consequences' as a permitted detection method from 1st April 2004. There was a drop of 4.2 percentage points in detection rate for the Complainant declined to prosecute detection method between 2003/04 and 2004/05.

April 2006: In April 2006, a higher evidential standard was adopted within the PSNI following the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland. This resulted in a fall in the overall detection rate, from 30.6% in 2005/06 to 23.6% in 2006/07.

April 2007: From April 2007 some of the methods allowed for claiming non-sanction detections were discontinued altogether, and the overall detection rate within Northern Ireland fell further, from 23.6% in 2006/07 to 20.5% in 2007/08. Since this date the overall and sanction detection rates have essentially been the same.

2011/12: PSNI introduced discretionary disposals during 2011/12 and this may have contributed to the fall in the sanction detection rate in this financial year. During 2011/12 and 2012/13 discretionary disposals were not included as a valid Home Office detection method and so were not available for inclusion within the crime detection rate in place at that time. It was identified that each use had a negative impact on the overall detection rate. To illustrate this, inclusion of discretionary disposals in the overall detection rate would have had the impact of adding around 3 percentage points.

June 2012: Penalty Notices for Disorder were introduced within Northern Ireland in June 2012. These are counted as a valid Home Office detection method and can be issued for a range of offences. Theft shoplifting (up to an including the value of £100 where goods are recovered in a saleable condition or the retailer has been compensated for their loss) and criminal damage (up to and including the value of £200) are the only notifiable offences for which PNDs can be issued and that are therefore included in the crime detection rate. PNDs can also be issued for the non-notifiable offences of disorderly behaviour, behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace, resisting/obstructing/impeding a constable, indecent behaviour and drunk in a public place.

April 2013: Introduction of the limited crime outcomes framework operating within PSNI, with outcomes for 2013/14 incorporating those outcomes where an offender receives a formal sanction, outcomes where no further action is taken against an offender and discretionary disposals.

2.8 'No crimes'

Police forces record some crimes which are subsequently 'no crimed' where it is determined by the police that no crime actually took place. The HOCR set out circumstances under which a crime report may be 'no crimed'. These include situations where a crime is considered to have been recorded in error or where, having been recorded, additional verifiable information becomes available that determines that no crime was committed (for further information see the 'general runes' section of the HOCR). 'No crimes' relate to crimes

already recorded and are therefore distinct from incident reports that are not recorded as crimes in the first place.

Crime reports that are 'no crimed' are removed from the police recorded crime statistics. Within PSNI all 'no crime' decisions are made centrally by staff working within the Statistics Branch.

2.9 Revisions policy

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and will be subject to slight revision until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. This means that the totals for each month, crime type and policing district for each month from 1st April each year can change every time the figures are published during that financial year.

These revisions will happen for one of a number of reasons:

- Incidents identified as crimes but which are not processed on the crime recording system by the time the figures are extracted for publication will appear in subsequent updates. By the time we reach the end of the financial year in March, all outstanding crimes are identified and actioned before figures for the financial year are finalised.
- Figures may change from month to month due to crimes being reclassified from one crime type to another during the financial year. This may be because quality checks have identified the crime as incorrectly classified, or further information may indicate that the circumstances surrounding the crime were not as initially recorded.
- These revisions are not always in an upwards direction. The Home Office Counting Rules allow crimes initially recorded to be 'no crime'd' and removed from the crime figures (see 2.8 'No crimes'). This can happen for a number of reasons:
  - the crime was committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded;
  - additional verifiable information becomes available which determines that no notifiable crime has been committed;
  - the crime, as alleged, constitutes part of a crime already recorded;
  - the reported incident was recorded as a crime in error.

  Full guidance on 'no crimes' is available in the Home Office Counting Rules.

The extent of revisions is provided in each monthly update published on the PSNI internet site. The format of this information is shown below. When each latest monthly update is published, the previous bulletin is transferred to the Crime Statistics Archive section of the internet site, where it will remain for the rest of the financial year.

Extent of revisions for crime figures contained in the monthly update to dd/mm/yyyy, which was first published dd/mm/yyyy.

Numbers & Percentages

	As initially published	As currently published	Scale of revision		% change between years	
			number	%	As initially published	As currently published
Financial Year to date total	xx	xx	xx	xx %	xx %	xx %
Latest 12 months total	xx	xx	xx	xx %	xx %	xx %

3 Crime types

Crime types are split into two broad categories of Victim-based crime and Other crimes against society. Since April 2013 the majority of fraud offences occurring in England and Wales are reported to Action Fraud. PSNI is not yet part of this process and so continues to record these fraud offences as 'other fraud' which is classified outside the two broad categories of victim-based crime and other crimes against society.

Victim-based crimes include: violence against the person; sexual offences; robbery, theft offences (including burglary); criminal damage

Other crimes against society include: possession of weapons offences; public order offences; drug offences; miscellaneous crimes against society

VICTIM-BASED CRIMES

3.1 Violence against the person

Violence against the person offences contain the full spectrum of assaults, from pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm, to murder. Even within the same offence classification, the degree of violence varies considerably between incidents.

Long-term trends in these types of offences can be difficult to interpret as they are influenced by a number of factors, such as changes in recording practice over time and changes in the levels of public reporting of such incidents. Therefore the Northern Ireland Crime Survey is the best measure for long-term trends in violence at a Northern Ireland level. Police statistics are important for showing the mix of violent crimes dealt with and recorded by the police. They are an important measure of activity locally and a source of operational information to help identify and address local crime problems, at a lower geographical level than is possible using the NICS. Police statistics also provide more reliable information on less common crimes, such as robbery, and are currently the only source of data on homicides and offences against those not resident in households.

Local policing activity and priorities affect the levels of reported and recorded violent crime. Where the police are proactive in addressing low-level violence and anti-social behaviour, this can lead to more of these crimes being brought to their attention and being recorded. For example, research by the Cardiff Violence Research Group showed an association between the introduction of CCTV surveillance and increased police detection of violence (Sivarajasingam *et al.*, 2003).

Police recorded crime data are subject to changes in police recording practices. The 1998 changes to the Home Office Counting Rules had a very significant impact on the recording of violent and sexual crime; In England & Wales the number of violence against the person offences recorded by the police increased by 118 per cent as a result of the 1998 changes (Povey and Prime, 1999). In Northern Ireland there was an increase of 182 per cent as a result of these changes. Much of this increase resulted from a widening of the offence coverage to include assaults with little or no physical injury and offences of harassment (again with no injury).

The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), introduced in April 2002, again resulted in increased recording of violent and sexual crimes particularly for less serious offences, as well as for some other offences. In England & Wales there was an estimated NCRS effect of 23 per cent on violence against the person offences in the first 12 months of implementation, although it was recognised that this effect was unlikely to be complete within the first 12 months (Simmons *et al.*, 2003).

Audits undertaken by the Audit Commission on behalf of the Home Office indicate substantial improvements in crime recording across forces in the two to three years following NCRS introduction, which would particularly impact on violence against the person and result in increases in recorded crimes for this category.

In police recorded crime statistics, violence against the person is grouped into two broad, high-level categories of violence with injury and violence without injury.

- **Violence with injury** includes all incidents of homicide, wounding and assault with injury. Attempts at inflicting injury are also included.
- **Violence without injury** includes all incidents of assault without injury and offences such as threats to kill and harassment.

3.1.1 Violence with injury

The categories described below are included within violence with injury. Attempts at inflicting injury are also included.

Homicide: Includes murder, manslaughter, infanticide and corporate manslaughter (where an organisation is deemed responsible for a person's death).

Death or serious injury by driving offences: Includes causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving, careless or inconsiderate driving, driving under the influence of drink or drugs or while being an unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured driver.

Grievous bodily harm (GBH): This includes injury resulting in permanent disability, more than minor permanent disfigurement, broken bones, fractured skull, compound fractures, substantial loss of blood, lengthy treatment or serious psychiatric injury (based on expert evidence).

- GBH with intent occurs when there is clear evidence of a deliberate attempt to inflict serious bodily harm regardless of level of injury sustained. These offences are recorded in classification 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm.
- GBH without intent occurs when serious bodily harm results but there is no evidence of a deliberate intent to inflict such an injury. Prior to April 2008, GBH without intent was not separated out from a much broader category of less serious wounding that mostly consisted of Actual Bodily Harm (AOABH). These offences are recorded in classification 8N Assault with injury.
- The definition of GBH with intent rests upon whether "the actions of the offender clearly show a deliberate attempt to inflict serious bodily harm". The clarification to the rules from April 2008 makes this clear and that "the gravity of the injury resulting is not necessarily the determining factor". The rules were clarified as there had previously been some confusion as to whether the degree of injury sustained, rather than intent, should be the sole determining factor in the recording of these offences.

Actual Bodily Harm (AOABH): This relates to any assault with injury which is not GBH (with or without intent) and includes internal injury and shock (when accompanied by expert psychological evidence). AOABH offences are included within classification 8N Assault with injury, as are offences of assault on police with injury.

Attempted murder is also recorded within violence with injury, as is classification 5E Endangering life which includes, for example, certain firearms and explosives offences and administering poison with intent.

3.1.2 Violence without injury

The categories described below are included within violence without injury.

Threats to kill: This is where an individual fears that the offender's threat is real and may be carried out.

Harassment offences: These are incidents where no other substantive notifiable offence exists, but when looked at as a course of conduct are likely to cause fear, alarm or distress. In Northern Ireland these will incorporate offences of intimidation such as intimidation to leave residence/occupation, intimidation to leave employment or to do/refrain from doing any act.

Assault without injury offences: Those offences where, at the most, a feeling of touch or passing moment of pain is experienced by the victim.

Other offences within this classification include conspiracy to murder, cruelty to children/young persons, child abduction, kidnapping and assault on police without injury.

Domestic Abuse: Recorded crime statistics do not specifically identify offences of domestic abuse. However, where there is a domestic abuse motivation associated with any incident or recorded crime, PSNI will record this motivating factor on the individual incident or crime record. These figures are available in separate bulletins dedicated to statistics on incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation.

Hate Motivations: While in England & Wales there are specific offences in law of racially or religiously aggravated assault, these offences do not exist in Northern Ireland. However as with domestic abuse, PSNI will record a motivating factor relating to hate (racist, homophobic, sectarian, faith/religion, disability and transphobic) on the individual crime record where it is appropriate to do so. These figures are available in separate bulletins dedicated to statistics on incidents and crimes with a hate motivation.

3.2 Sexual offences

The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, introduced in February 2009, altered the definitions of some categories of sexual offence so comparisons around this time should be made with caution (similar

legislation, The Sexual Offences Act 2003, was introduced in England and Wales in May 2004). The sexual offences category is split into Rape (which includes attempted rape) and Other sexual offences.

Other sexual offences

The group of other sexual offences recorded by the police covers sexual assault and unlawful sexual activity (mostly involving consenting adults and is therefore particularly influenced by police activity in investigating such crime). It includes among other offences, exploitation of prostitution but not prostitution itself (which is not a notifiable offence), incest, abuse of children through prostitution and pornography, abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature and exposure. Certain offences such as sexual grooming, voyeurism and trafficking for sexual exploitation, which are included in this group, were originally introduced in Northern Ireland through the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

3.3 Robbery

A robbery is an incident or offence in which force or the threat of force is used either during or immediately prior to a theft or attempted theft. As with violence against the person, police recorded robberies cover a wide range of seriousness from armed bank robberies to muggings for mobile phones or small amounts of money. Recorded crime offences also distinguish between robbery of personal property (personal robbery) and business property (business robbery). Robbery of business property is a recorded crime classification where goods stolen belong to a business or other corporate body (such as a bank or a shop), regardless of the location of the robbery. The taking of vehicles during robberies (often termed hijacking) are also included as robbery.

3.4 Theft offences

Theft offences include offences of burglary, vehicle offences, theft from the person, bicycle theft, shoplifting and other theft offences.

3.4.1 Burglary

Burglary: The police record an offence of burglary if a person enters any building as a trespasser and with intent to commit an offence of theft, GBH or unlawful damage.

Aggravated burglary: This occurs when the burglar is carrying a firearm, imitation firearm, offensive weapon or explosive.

Recorded crime figures are provided separately for burglaries that occur in domestic properties and those which occur in commercial or other properties.

Domestic burglaries: These include burglaries in all inhabited dwellings, including inhabited caravans, houseboats and holiday homes, as well as sheds and garages connected to the main dwelling (for example, by a connecting door).

Non-domestic burglaries: These include burglaries to businesses (including hotels and similar accommodation) and also some burglaries of sheds and outhouses where these are not clearly connected to the inhabited property.

Attempted burglary: This is recorded by the police if there is clear evidence that the offender made an actual, physical attempt to gain entry to a building (e.g. damage to locks, or broken doors) but was unsuccessful.

3.4.2 Offences against vehicles

The police recorded crime category of offences against vehicles covers private and commercial vehicles (although does not distinguish between the two).

Thefts or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle: This is where the vehicle is taken without the prior consent of the owner or other lawful authority; this includes incidents where there is intent is to permanently deprive the owner or where intent is not evident, typically including ‘joyriding’ where the car is later recovered.

Aggravated vehicle taking: This is where a vehicle once taken is known to have been driven dangerously, damaged or caused an accident.
Theft from a vehicle: These are where property in or on the vehicle is targeted (including attempts).

Interfering with a motor vehicle: This includes crimes where, while damage has been caused to the vehicle as part of an attempt to steal either the vehicle or its contents or to take the vehicle without consent, the specific intent of the offender is not obvious. For example, a car door may be damaged, which shows an

attempt was made to open it, but it cannot be determined if the intent was to steal the car or some contents within it.

The taking of vehicles during robberies (often termed hijacking) are included within the robbery offence group.

3.4.3 Theft from the person, bicycle theft, shoplifting and all other theft offences

Theft from the person: theft, including attempts, of a handbag, wallet, cash etc. directly from the victim, but without the use of physical force against the victim, or the threat of it.

All other theft offences includes thefts that are not covered by other theft offence groups, including offences of making off without payment which, prior to April 2013, were included within fraud and forgery offences.

3.5 Criminal damage

Police recorded criminal damage results from any person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged. Damage which is repairable without cost, or which is accidental, is not included in police recorded crime statistics. Separate recorded crime figures exist for criminal damage to a dwelling, to a building other than a dwelling, to a vehicle and other criminal damage.

While in England & Wales there are specific offences in law of racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage, these offences do not exist in Northern Ireland. However as with the recording of similar offences within the violence against the person group, PSNI will record a motivating factor relating to hate (racist, homophobic, sectarian, faith/religion, disability and transphobic) on the individual crime record where it is appropriate to do so. These figures are available in separate bulletins dedicated to statistics on incidents and crimes with a hate motivation.

Arson: This is the act of deliberately setting fire to property including buildings and vehicles.

For vehicle crime, if a vehicle is stolen and later found deliberately burnt out by the same offender, one crime of theft of a vehicle is recorded by the police. If there is evidence that someone unconnected with the theft committed the arson, then an offence of arson is recorded by the police in addition to the theft.

OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY

3.6 Possession of weapons offences

This category includes possession of firearms with intent, possession of article with blade or point and possession of other weapons. Also included are possession of firearms offences and other firearms offences. If a weapon is used in the commission of an offence, then the police will normally record a more serious notifiable offence.

3.7 Public order offences

This category includes offences such as riot and violent disorder. Within the classification of other offences against the state and public order are crime types such as bomb hoax related offences, breach of non-molestation and sex offender orders and offences under anti-terrorist legislation.

3.8 Drug offences

In addition to the figures for offences of drug trafficking and non-trafficking that are provided in the recorded crime series, the Police Service of Northern Ireland produces a separate annual bulletin on Drug Seizures and Arrests.

3.9 Miscellaneous crimes against society

This category covers all remaining crime types. Offences such as exploitation of prostitution and soliciting for the purpose of prostitution were included within sexual offences prior to April 2013. In relation to soliciting, the reclassification exercise conducted during 2010/11 identified that, within Northern Ireland, offences of soliciting for the purposes of prostitution had not been identified as notifiable offences. This omission was rectified and these offences are included in the recorded crime figures from April 2011.

3.10 Other Fraud

The measurement of fraud is challenging as it is a deceptive crime which is difficult to detect accurately and is often targeted at organisations rather than individuals. It is known to be under-reported to the police. In England and Wales fraud data from a range of sources are presented in their crime bulletins: National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), CSEW plastic card fraud module and UK Cards Association in addition to those fraud and forgery offences still recorded by the police.

Under the Fraud Act 2006 (introduced in January 2007), fraud is defined as dishonestly making a false representation to obtain property or money for themselves or another. Previously it was defined as dishonestly deceiving another to obtain either property or pecuniary advantage.

The introduction of the Fraud Act 2006 changed the recording of cheque and plastic card fraud from a 'per transaction' to a 'per account' basis. This means that if an account is defrauded, one offence is recorded rather than one offence per fraudulent transaction as previously. This change was introduced to reduce bureaucracy and to reflect that the financial loss from this type of fraudulent crime is generally borne by the account holding financial institution rather than by the account holder or those involved in processing the transactions.

The changes resulting from the introduction of the Fraud Act 2006 mean that police recorded fraud and forgery figures from 2007/08 onwards are not comparable with previous years.

National Fraud Authority and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau: The Fraud Act 2006 and the Attorney General's Fraud Review resulted in the creation of a National Fraud Authority (NFA). One of their key objectives is to better support the reporting of fraudulent crimes and their subsequent investigation. In 2009/10 the NFA opened Action Fraud, a national fraud reporting centre that records incidents of fraud directly from the public by phone or internet. Action Fraud work with partners in law enforcement – the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), run by the City of London Police – to ensure a joined-up approach to policing and detecting fraud. In 2011/12 five police forces in England and Wales began directing fraud offences to Action Fraud. The remaining police forces in England and Wales transferred responsibility for recording NFIB fraud offences to Action Fraud from 1st April 2013. In Northern Ireland reports of fraud continue to be recorded by PSNI as responsibility for dealing with these offences has not been transferred to Action Fraud.

Offences previously recorded within fraud and forgery and which continue to be recorded by all police forces but are included under other classifications from April 2013 are:

- making off without payment – now included in all other theft offences;
- possession of items for use in fraud, other forgery, possession of false documents and fraud, forgery etc associated with vehicle or driver records – now included in miscellaneous crimes against society.

Offences of fraud by Company Director, Sole Trader etc, false accounting, other fraud (not covered elsewhere including deception), fraud by failing to disclose information and bankruptcy and insolvency offences are fraud offences which continue to be included in the recorded crime figures for PSNI but which, in England and Wales, are reported through Action Fraud. These will appear as 'Other fraud' in the PSNI figures.

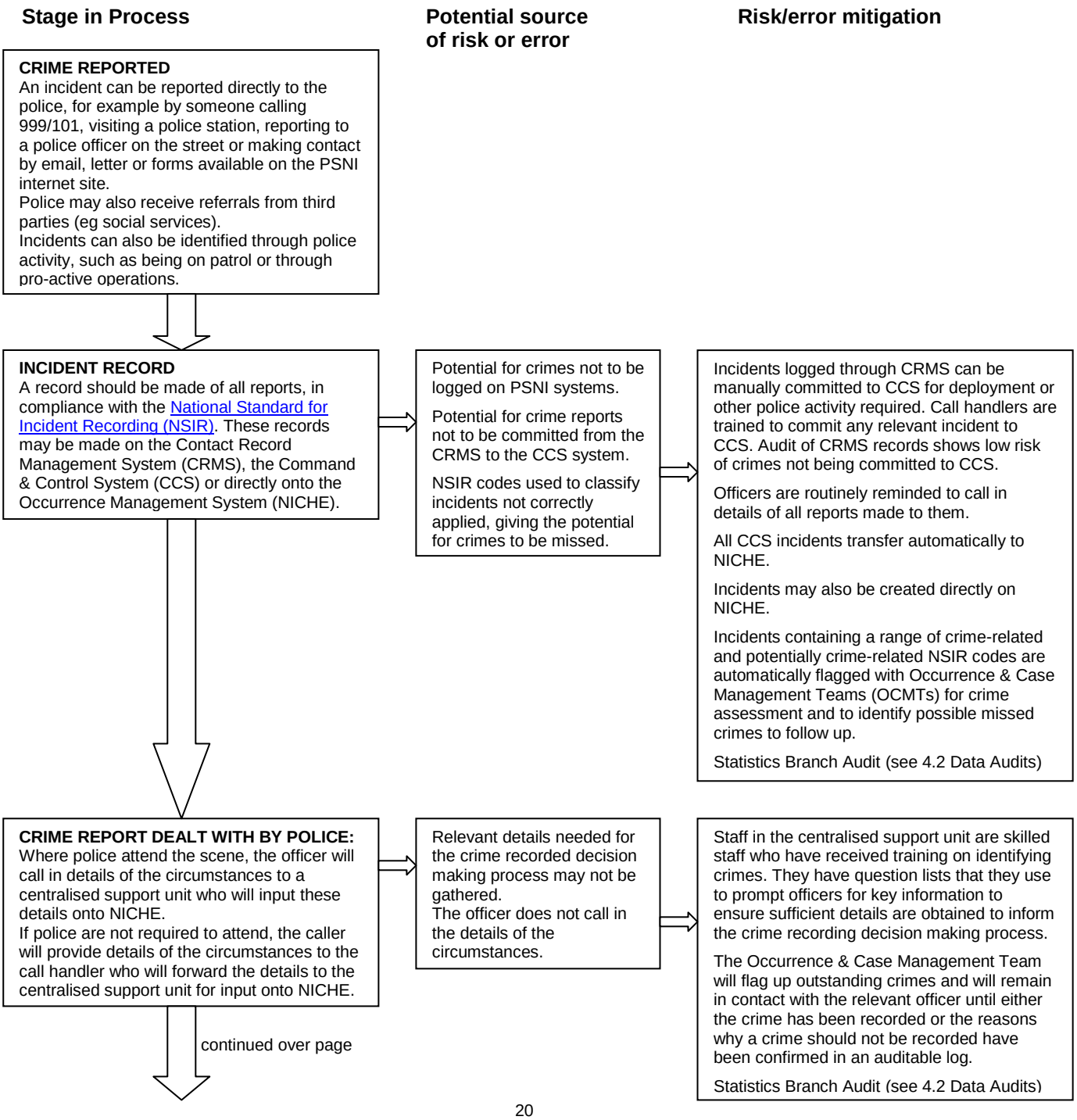
4 PSNI recording processes, data quality and data availability

4.1 Recording processes within PSNI
4.2 Quality Assurance and Data Audit
4.3 Data Management
4.4 Timeliness
4.5 Data Availability
4.6 Publication

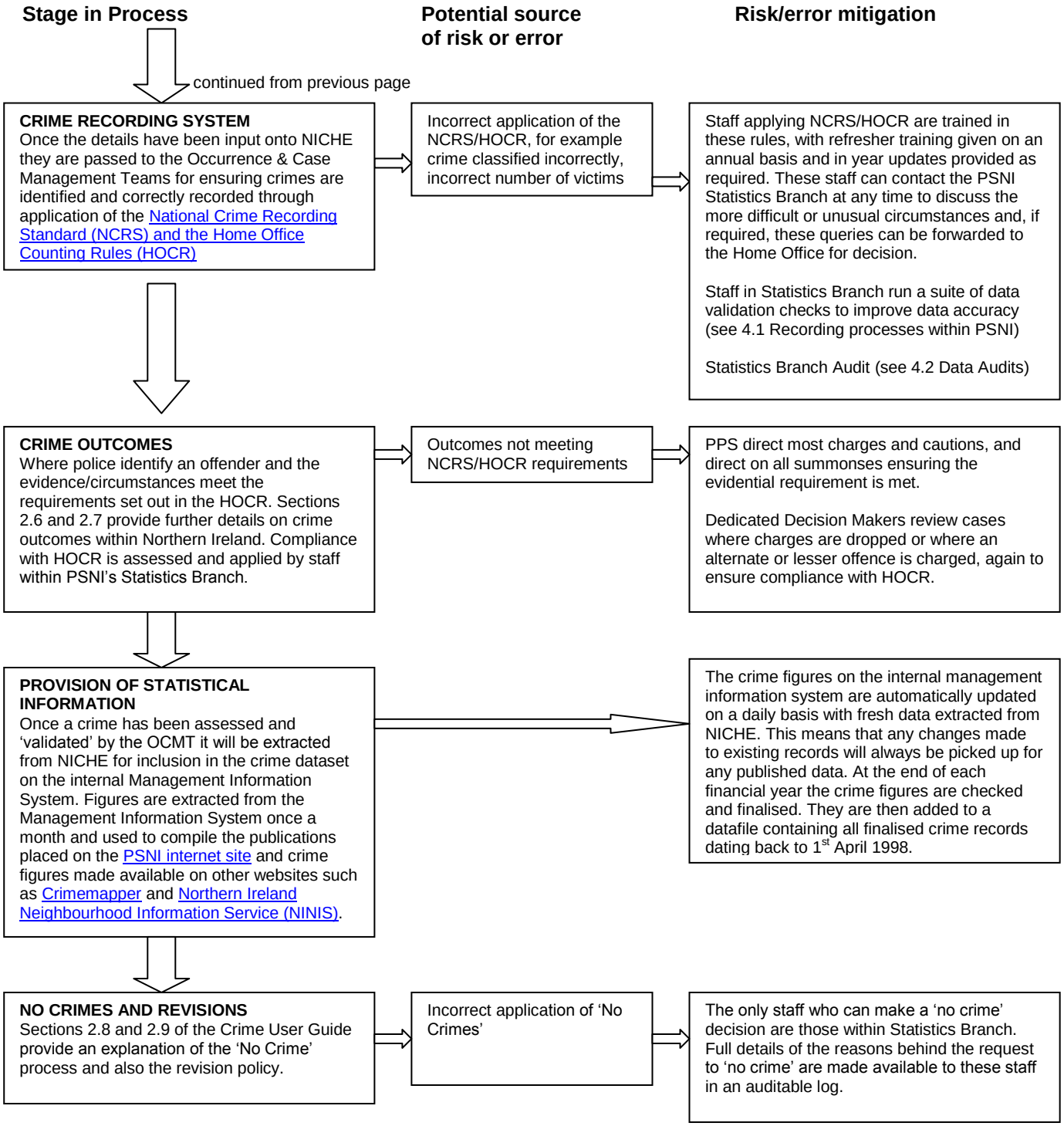
4.1 Recording processes within PSNI

The PSNI processes for recording crimes generally start off with a call for service from a member of the public. However the recording of a crime may also result from police generated action. An overview of the process, from call for service to publication of statistics, is outlined below. Further details on the quality assurance procedures that are applied during the process are provided in the following sections.

Crime Recording Process within PSNI


Stage in Process
Potential source of risk or error
Risk/error mitigation
CRIME REPORTED
An incident can be reported directly to the police, for example by someone calling 999/101, visiting a police station, reporting to a police officer on the street or making contact by email, letter or forms available on the PSNI internet site.
Police may also receive referrals from third parties (eg social services).
Incidents can also be identified through police activity, such as being on patrol or through pro-active operations.
INCIDENT RECORD
A record should be made of all reports, in compliance with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). These records may be made on the Contact Record Management System (CRMS), the Command & Control System (CCS) or directly onto the Occurrence Management System (NICHE).
Potential for crimes not to be logged on PSNI systems.
Potential for crime reports not to be committed from the CRMS to the CCS system.
NSIR codes used to classify incidents not correctly applied, giving the potential for crimes to be missed.
Incidents logged through CRMS can be manually committed to CCS for deployment or other police activity required. Call handlers are trained to commit any relevant incident to CCS. Audit of CRMS records shows low risk of crimes not being committed to CCS.
Officers are routinely reminded to call in details of all reports made to them.
All CCS incidents transfer automatically to NICHE.
Incidents may also be created directly on NICHE.
Incidents containing a range of crime-related and potentially crime-related NSIR codes are automatically flagged with Occurrence & Case Management Teams (OCMTs) for crime assessment and to identify possible missed crimes to follow up.
Statistics Branch Audit (see 4.2 Data Audits)
CRIME REPORT DEALT WITH BY POLICE:
Where police attend the scene, the officer will call in details of the circumstances to a centralised support unit who will input these details onto NICHE.
If police are not required to attend, the caller will provide details of the circumstances to the call handler who will forward the details to the centralised support unit for input onto NICHE.
Relevant details needed for the crime recorded decision making process may not be gathered.
The officer does not call in the details of the circumstances.
Staff in the centralised support unit are skilled staff who have received training on identifying crimes. They have question lists that they use to prompt officers for key information to ensure sufficient details are obtained to inform the crime recording decision making process.
The Occurrence & Case Management Team will flag up outstanding crimes and will remain in contact with the relevant officer until either the crime has been recorded or the reasons why a crime should not be recorded have been confirmed in an auditable log.
Statistics Branch Audit (see 4.2 Data Audits)
continued over page

Crime Recording Process within PSNI (continued)


Stage in Process
Potential source of risk or error
Risk/error mitigation
continued from previous page
CRIME RECORDING SYSTEM
Once the details have been input onto NICHE they are passed to the Occurrence & Case Management Teams for ensuring crimes are identified and correctly recorded through application of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR)
Incorrect application of the NCRS/HOCR, for example crime classified incorrectly, incorrect number of victims
Staff applying NCRS/HOCR are trained in these rules, with refresher training given on an annual basis and in year updates provided as required. These staff can contact the PSNI Statistics Branch at any time to discuss the more difficult or unusual circumstances and, if required, these queries can be forwarded to the Home Office for decision.
Staff in Statistics Branch run a suite of data validation checks to improve data accuracy (see 4.1 Recording processes within PSNI)
Statistics Branch Audit (see 4.2 Data Audits)
CRIME OUTCOMES
Where police identify an offender and the evidence/circumstances meet the requirements set out in the HOCR. Sections 2.6 and 2.7 provide further details on crime outcomes within Northern Ireland. Compliance with HOCR is assessed and applied by staff within PSNI's Statistics Branch.
Outcomes not meeting NCRS/HOCR requirements
PPS direct most charges and cautions, and direct on all summonses ensuring the evidential requirement is met.
Dedicated Decision Makers review cases where charges are dropped or where an alternate or lesser offence is charged, again to ensure compliance with HOCR.
PROVISION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION
Once a crime has been assessed and 'validated' by the OCMT it will be extracted from NICHE for inclusion in the crime dataset on the internal Management Information System. Figures are extracted from the Management Information System once a month and used to compile the publications placed on the PSNI internet site and crime figures made available on other websites such as Crimemapper and Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS).
The crime figures on the internal management information system are automatically updated on a daily basis with fresh data extracted from NICHE. This means that any changes made to existing records will always be picked up for any published data. At the end of each financial year the crime figures are checked and finalised. They are then added to a datafile containing all finalised crime records dating back to 1st April 1998.
NO CRIMES AND REVISIONS
Sections 2.8 and 2.9 of the Crime User Guide provide an explanation of the 'No Crime' process and also the revision policy.
Incorrect application of 'No Crimes'
The only staff who can make a 'no crime' decision are those within Statistics Branch. Full details of the reasons behind the request to 'no crime' are made available to these staff in an auditable log.

The detailed processes underlying the main stages outlined in the flowchart above have evolved over the years and will continue to evolve as changes to systems and structures are introduced. The NISRA statisticians who compile the police recorded crime statistics have always been closely involved in any change processes to ensure that they take into account any statistics that need to be derived from these systems.

4.2 Quality Assurance and Data Audit

Concerns about police recorded crime data quality have come to the fore following the recent Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) report into data quality issues relating to police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales and the UK Statistics authority reassessment and de-designation of police recorded crime in England & Wales and the decision not to confer designation to Scotland.

The two main issues that emerged from the recent UK Statistics Authority assessment report of crime statistics in England & Wales related to (i) police recorded crime data quality issues and to (ii) the divergence between recorded crime and crime survey trends. A comparison of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland

and the Northern Ireland Crime Survey can be found in section 2.2 of this user guide. Section 4 of the user guide deals with issues relating to police recorded crime data quality, describing the crime recording process (section 4.1) and providing details of the quality assurance and data audit procedures in place within PSNI (section 4.2).

The police recorded crime statistics produced by PSNI for Northern Ireland are compiled by statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) who are seconded to the PSNI. As such, they are in a unique position in that they undertake the Force Crime Registrar function (compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules) in addition to their statistician responsibilities (the collation and publication of the crime statistics). Furthermore, as the PSNI covers the entire region of Northern Ireland, their statistics form the official statistics for Northern Ireland and therefore the quality is not compromised by the requirement to merge datasets from a number of forces (as is the case in England & Wales).

Over the last 15 years the NISRA statisticians in the PSNI have developed and implemented a detailed series of crime data quality checks and have been closely involved in the design of the crime recording process within PSNI. This involvement has enabled them to integrate their quality assurance processes along with the operational requirements of the system and embed them within the system design. As a result, the PSNI's crime data quality is managed by a combination of crime recording process design coupled with a range of data quality checks. The key objectives of the PSNI crime recording quality assurance process are to minimise the level of missed crime and to ensure that the correct crime type is recorded.

4.2.1 Quality assurance processes

The main quality assurance processes and checks fall into two main groups; those that are undertaken by staff in Occurrence & Case Management Teams (OCMTs) and those that are undertaken by staff in the PSNI's Statistics Branch.

OCMT quality assurance checks: The main role of OCMT staff in respect of crime recording is to ensure crimes are correctly identified and recorded through application of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). These staff also have a role in identifying potential missed crimes and following these up with investigating officers. To assist them in this task PSNI's Statistics Branch have developed a risk based approach to identifying potentially missed crimes; this is an automated process whereby incidents that have been opened or closed with specific NSIR codes on the PSNI's Command & Control system are automatically flagged to OCMT staff for assessment. If the incident details suggest a crime should be recorded, but none has yet appeared on the system, the OCMT will follow up with the investigating officer. If there are no details within the incident to suggest a crime has occurred, OCMT staff will apply an 'incident only' marker to indicate it has been assessed and the outcome of that assessment.

Statistics Branch quality assurance checks: In addition to the various quality assurance measures described previously, staff within the PSNI's Statistics Branch undertake a series of data quality checks on an ongoing basis in order to identify and correct inconsistencies within the data and to minimise any under-recording or over-recording of crime. A risk based approach has been applied to the running of these quality checks, with priority given to those that have a direct impact on the quality of published recorded crime figures.

Priority 1 checks: These are checks carried out on a daily basis to maximise the accuracy of figures which are updated daily for internal performance monitoring;
Priority 2 checks: These are checks run on a monthly basis which identify potential missed crimes and crime outcomes;
Priority 3 checks: These are checks run on a monthly basis which improve data quality, for example:

- essential checks to ensure that victim age, victim gender or injury level matches the offence that has been recorded;
- desirable checks which identify records where the location, property or weapon details may be inconsistent with the recorded offence;
- non-essential checks which may identify missing or potentially incorrect information but which would not have a direct impact on the quality of the published recorded crime figures.

Once a crime has been 'validated' on the NICHE crime recording system (ie processed, checked and available for inclusion in the police recorded crime figures), only staff in Statistics Branch have the ability to reclassify the crime or to apply a 'no crime' decision. This helps to 'lock down' the process once a crime has been identified. Therefore inaccuracies identified through the quality assurance process outlined above are corrected directly on NICHE by Statistics Branch staff, with queries issued to OCMTs if further information is required. There are approximately 93 standard quality checks in total and they are reviewed on an annual basis to confirm that they continue to be sufficient to cover the range of data quality issues that exist. Should

individual checks no longer be required they will be removed from the process. Additional checks will be introduced by NISRA statisticians should a new data quality issue be identified.

The other key quality assurance check currently undertaken by Statistics Branch staff is the 'Incident Only' check (those incidents previously checked by OCMTs and identified as having no crimes contained within them). These are important in picking up potential crimes that may have been missed by OCMT staff or those incidents which contained no indication of crime at the initial check but information added at a later stage suggested a crime may have occurred. To allow time for the crime recording process to be completed, there is a lag of around two weeks before Statistics Branch staff would check an 'incident only' record. Between April and November 2013 Statistics Branch staff audited nearly half of the records identified by OCMTs as 'incident only'. Of these approximately 3 per cent were referred back to OCMTs for further information and to date this has increased the total level of crime by around 1 per cent.

Statistics Branch will also monitor the ratio of incidents flagged to OCMTS for checking to incidents containing one or more crimes. This monitoring provides an indication of the consistency of the crime recording process. Over the last 5 years this ratio has remained relatively constant, varying between 48% in 2012/13 and 52% in both 2008/09 and 2013/14.

NISRA statisticians also complete work on an annual basis to improve the level of completeness and quality of postcodes attached to each crime record. This is to assist in the provision of crime data by various geographic areas such as ward and parliamentary constituency. Further details on this process are available in Section 7 Geographic Recording of Crime.

Section 5 (domestic abuse incidents and crimes) and section 6 (hate motivated incidents and crimes) provide additional information on recording processes and data quality as applied to these data outputs.

4.2.2 Data Audits

The PSNI does not fall under the direct remit of the Home Office and has therefore not been included in crime data audit programmes run by either Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) or by the Audit Commission. However in light of the recent crime recording data quality issues in England & Wales and Scotland, HMIC were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014, similar to the audits they conducted in England & Wales earlier in 2014. The outcome of this audit will be made known once it becomes available.

Whilst PSNI adopts the Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard there are some differences in legislation and in the prosecution processes / disposal options available within Northern Ireland when compared with England and Wales. This can make it more difficult for auditors from England & Wales to directly apply the same audit approach to PSNI without having a good understanding of these differences. For example Sections 4 and 5 of the Public Order Act 1986, covering offences within E&W classification 9A Public Fear, Alarm or Distress, do not extend to Northern Ireland. Another example is that PSNI is not part of the Action Fraud/NFIB set up and so are still required to record and deal with fraud offences, which would not be the same in England & Wales.

A key aspect of the England & Wales audit regime is that headline compliance rates are identified and reported. The range of PSNI quality assurance processes outlined in section 4.2.1 cover the relevant aspects of the England & Wales audit regime with regard to ensuring data accuracy. However to produce ongoing compliance figures in relation to this work would be impractical as the quality assurance processes are designed to enable staff to identify and correct errors on NICHE rather than to keep records of the numbers of problems they encounter. As a result the staff within Statistics Branch have, over the years, designed audits to reflect and expand upon those conducted in England & Wales, in order to provide a level of compliance and to identify any new issues that may not be picked up by existing processes.

Audits of Levels of Missed Crime with PSNI Recorded Crime (2004 – 2011/12): PSNI crime recording audits conducted between 2004 and 2008 indicated that the level of missed crimes ranged from 94% to 96%. In 2009/10 the average compliance rate was 96.5%, while in 2010/11 the average compliance rate was 97.6% and in 2011/12 it was 91%, all of which would have been considered as good or excellent performance based on the Home Office Data Quality Assurance manual guidance. The types of crimes most commonly missed tend to be low level crimes such as minor assaults, harassment, minor theft and minor criminal damage.

Latest Crime Data Audit undertaken within PSNI (Dec 2013 – Feb 2014): This latest audit was completed in February 2014 in light of the high profile media coverage of the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) report. As this latest audit was well underway in advance of the publication of the Statistics Authority's assessment of England and Wales crime figures in January 2014, it focused on the main aspects of the Home Office Data Audit Manual as well as on key data quality aspects covered by an HMIC inspection in Kent that reported in February 2013.

The main aspect of this latest PSNI audit was the assessment of some 1,800 incidents that were reported to police between 1st April 2013 and 30th September 2013 and where the code used to open the incident on the Command & Control system was crime-related. The basic aim of the audit was to examine incidents reported to the police, identify if the report should have resulted in a crime being recorded and, if so:

- was the crime recorded within 72 hours (the time limit for recording a crime as stipulated in the Home Office Counting Rules);
- was the crime correctly classified; and
- was the correct number of victims identified.

It should be noted that the audit was undertaken by the PSNI's Statistics Branch and did not incorporate features of the HMIC inspection in Kent such as listening to the calls for service, directly contacting persons who reported crimes in order to discuss their experiences, or speaking to contact management staff, staff in the crime management support unit, OCMT staff or investigating officers.

Of the 1,800 incidents likely to relate to a crime, 1,327 were identified as requiring a crime to be recorded, he table below shows the compliance rates in respect of these. The remaining 473 did not require any crime to be recorded.

	number	%
Crime recording overall compliance (base = 1,327)	1,229	93%
Crime classified correctly (base = 1,229)	1,193	97%
Correct number of victims recorded (base = 1,229)	1,199	98%
Crime'd within 72 hours (base = 1,229)	898	73%

There were 98 incidents identified where a crime was either definitely missed or where there was insufficient information available to make a crime recording decision, leading to the overall compliance rate of 93%.

These missed crimes were mostly less serious crimes such as harassment type offences, criminal damage, theft and assault without injury. While offences such as robbery and burglary were much less likely to be missed, there were some incidents where sexual offences were reported to police but a crime was not recorded.

In terms of comparisons with audits in other police forces, the HMIC crime recording audit of Kent Constabulary (February 2013) found 90% of crimes recorded correctly. The more recent HMIC report on the interim findings of their Crime Data Integrity Audits for the first 13 police forces in England & Wales, published on 1st May 2014, found that the levels of crime recorded correctly ranged from 68% - 94%.

The PSNI audit also examined incidents that were not crime-related. An additional 100 incidents opened on the domestic code and 100 opened on the contact record code were examined, along with 323 incidents reported through the contact record management system (CRMS) which were not committed to the Command & Control system. While there were some records opened on the domestic code where there was insufficient level of detail available to establish the exact circumstances of the incident, in the vast majority of cases they were correctly marked on the system as having a domestic abuse motivation. The level of crimes potentially missed in those incidents opened as contact records was low and in only one of the 323 CRMS incidents not committed to the Command & Control was there the suggestion of a missed crime.

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) removed the National Statistics designation from the police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales in January 2014 and from the police recorded crime statistics in Scotland in July 2014. In February 2014 UKSA approached PSNI seeking reassurance on the quality of the recorded crime statistics that are produced for Northern Ireland. A detailed account of the various quality assurance processes in place was provided. The recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are currently being re-assessed.

4.3 Data Management

Statistics Branch has access to data which is extracted from the NICHE recording system on a daily basis. Automated processes ensure that the internal management information system and reports are updated each day. Access to these data extracts enables Statistics Branch to produce bulletins for publication and to respond to ad hoc requests for information.

4.4 Timeliness

A balance needs to be obtained between the requirement for figures to be as up-to-date as possible and the requirement to publish figures which are of appropriate quality and completeness for use. There is a lag of around four weeks between the end of the month and publication of the monthly bulletin. Each monthly crime bulletin highlights the percentage of crime records that have completed the validation process for the period of time covered within the bulletin, to give an indication of how complete the in-year data is. Ideally the percentage of crime records still under process for the latest month covered would be less than 5%.

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and remain subject to change until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. Final figures for the full financial year (presented as per the monthly updates) are published around six weeks after the end of the financial year. This is to allow for additional quality checks to be completed on the data. The more detailed annual commentary and spreadsheet is published in early July.

4.5 Data Availability

Information that is published in the monthly and annual crime bulletins has been examined to make sure it meets levels of quality and completeness appropriate for publication. The proportion of records for which information is unavailable is identified in the bulletins and accompanying spreadsheets. There will be some variables held on the operational system for which the level of missing or incomplete information is too high to allow for inclusion in the bulletins, or where the data quality is not sufficient for publication.

Crime classifications are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced and also the length of time period covered. The confidentiality protection arrangements document on the PSNI internet site provides additional information on PSNI's arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data and statistical disclosure control.

Therefore any requests for crime classifications or types of data not included in the bulletins are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Where there is potential for placing additional data on the website, this will be taken forward.

Where there are requests for types of information that would require additional processes to be put in place for gathering this information (eg business crime, retail crime), these will be forwarded within PSNI for a decision on whether there is a business requirement to collect information in this format.

4.5.1 Availability of Information Relating to Victim Characteristics

In the Home Office Counting Rules individual offences are identified as being victim-based, state-based or victim and state-based. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. For victim-based offences, the victim can be a member of the public (referred to here as person victim), a police officer who was the victim of a crime in the course of carrying out their duty, or a business or organisation. The introduction of the NICHE system in 2007/08 has enabled a breakdown of crime by the type of victim to be provided from this date.

Figures relating to victim characteristics are available for those victim-based offences where the victim is a person victim (as described above). Victim characteristic figures are provided at a Northern Ireland level for 12 month periods (either full financial years or the latest rolling 12 months), for a range of crime classifications and are made available through monthly and annual updates

Victim characteristics are not available for incidents that have not resulted in a crime being recorded, for example anti social behaviour incidents (see 2.1 for an explanation of what constitutes and incident and what constitutes a crime). This is mainly due to the proportion of such records for which victim characteristics are unavailable.

4.5.1.1 Victim Age

The age bands available for recorded crime are: under 18, 18-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-65 and 65+.

Figures are available for number of crimes recorded, number of sanction detections, sanction detection rates and population rates (per 1,000 population).

The following crime types are available for each age band:

- Violence with injury (including homicide)
- Vehicle offences

- Violence without injury
- Sexual offences
- Robbery
- Burglary
- All other theft offences
- Criminal damage
- Other crimes against society
- Other fraud
- All offences

4.5.1.2 Victim Gender

Figures are available (male, female, gender unknown) for the number of crimes recorded, number of sanction detections, sanction detection rates and population rates per 1,000 population.

The following crime types are available for each gender:

- Violence with injury (including homicide)
- Violence without injury
- Sexual offences
- Robbery
- Burglary
- Vehicle offences
- All other theft offences
- Criminal damage
- Other crimes against society
- Other fraud
- All offences

4.6 Publication

Annual data are published on a financial year basis. Provisional recorded crime data are published each month on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis. Provisional figures remain subject to change until the annual data are published. Provisional figures in each monthly bulletin supersede those published in previous monthly updates.

A publication schedule is available on the PSNI Internet site.

Further information on crime publications is available in the introduction to this user guide.

5 Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes

5.1 Definition of domestic abuse
5.2 Data use
5.3 Data collection
5.4 Data quality
5.5 Data Management
5.6 Timeliness
5.7 Data Availability
5.8 Publication

As well as publishing figures on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data, PSNI also publishes data on those incidents and crimes which have a domestic abuse motivation. Figures relating to domestic abuse incidents and crimes are not a National Statistics product.

5.1 Definition of domestic abuse

The Northern Ireland Regional Steering Group on Domestic Violence has defined domestic abuse as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation', where:
- **Incident** means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members;
- **Intimate partners** means there must have been a relationship with a degree of continuity and stability. The relationship must also have had (or reasonably supposed to have had) a sexual aspect, such as in the relationship between husband and wife or between others generally recognised as a couple including same sex couples; and
- **Family members** include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.

An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 2.1 Introduction to Police Recorded Crime. A crime will be recorded as domestic abuse where it meets the definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a notifiable offence being recorded. Where domestic abuse crimes are recorded they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics. The recording practices, methods of counting detections and crime types as described in Sections 2 and 3 apply equally to crimes with a domestic abuse motivation.

5.2 Data use

These statistics are used widely within PSNI as management information and to monitor performance on domestic abuse related targets against the Policing Plan. The figures are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate and policy development regarding domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. Furthermore it is widely accepted that there is under-reporting of domestic abuse incidents to the police. Whilst not directly comparable with police domestic abuse statistics, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey provides estimates of the level of under-reporting. Of all survey respondents in 2010/11 who had experienced some form of partner abuse since age 16, the police were unaware of 72.9% of any of the incidents in question (73.5% in 2009/10 and 71.4% in 2008/09). The survey further estimates that in 2010/11, 68.9% of single worst incidents of partner abuse were not reported to the police (69.1% in 2009/10 and 65.9% in 2008/09). Further details can be found in the bulletin Experience of Domestic Violence: Findings from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey

5.3 Data collection

Domestic abuse statistics have been collated by PSNI in their current format since 2004/05. While PSNI compiled statistics on domestic abuse prior to 2004/05, the method of data collection and definitions of crimes and crime types was not comparable and so these figures are not made available by PSNI's Statistics Branch.

The system which was used by PSNI in 2004/05 for crime recording (the integrated crime information system or 'ICIS') was modified to enable incidents to be identified as having a domestic abuse

motivation. Where an incident was given this marker, each crime recorded within that incident was also identified as having a domestic abuse motivation, although offences of assault of police were excluded from the domestic abuse crime figures.

The current system on which crime is recorded, NICHE, was introduced from 1st April 2007. This system refined the process for recording crimes with a domestic abuse motivation in that the marker identifying an incident or crime as domestic could be applied to each incident or crime separately. In other words a crime which may have been recorded within an incident identified as domestic, but which did not itself have a domestic motivation, would not have the domestic marker applied.

5.4 Data quality

While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, the identification of a domestic abuse motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of a domestic abuse motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, but audits and data quality checks are routinely conducted in an attempt to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.

5.5 Data Management

Statistics Branch has access to data which is extracted from the NICHE recording system on a daily basis. Automated processes ensure that the internal management information system and reports are updated each day. Access to these data extracts enables Statistics Branch to produce bulletins for publication and to respond to ad hoc requests for information.

5.6 Timeliness

A balance needs to be obtained between the requirement for figures to be as up-to-date as possible and the requirement to publish figures which are of appropriate quality and completeness for use. There is a lag of around eight weeks between the end of the quarter and publication of the quarterly bulletin to allow for routine data quality checks to be issued and competed by Districts.

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and remain subject to change until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. Final figures for the full financial year (presented as per the quarterly updates) are published around six weeks after the end of the financial year. This is to allow for additional quality checks to be completed on the data. The more detailed annual commentary and spreadsheet will be published in early July.

5.7 Data Availability

Information that is published in the quarterly and annual bulletins has been examined to make sure it meets levels of quality and completeness appropriate for publication. The proportion of records for which information is unavailable is identified in the bulletins and accompanying spreadsheets. There will be some variables held on the operational system for which the level of missing or incomplete information is too high to allow for inclusion in the bulletins, or where the data quality is not sufficient for publication.

Crime classifications are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced and also the length of time period covered. The confidentiality protection arrangements document on the PSNI internet site provides additional information on PSNI's arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data and statistical disclosure control.

Therefore any requests for crime classifications or types of data not included in the bulletins are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Where there is potential for placing additional data on the website, this will be taken forward.

Where there are requests for types of information that would require additional processes to be put in place for gathering this information, these will be forwarded within PSNI for a decision on whether there is a business requirement to collect information in this format.

5.7.1 Availability of Information Relating to Victim and Offender Characteristics

The Home Office has identified offences as being victim-based, state-based or victim and state-based. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. For victim-based crimes with a domestic abuse motivation the victim will be a member of the public, referred to as a person victim.

Figures relating to the characteristics of domestic abuse victims and offenders are available through the annual bulletins. The information on victim characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity/nationality) is based on the number of offences with a domestic abuse motivation recorded in each financial year, whereas information on offender characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity/nationality) is based on the number of offences with a domestic abuse motivation detected in each financial year. It should be noted that offences detected may have been recorded in a previous financial year. For the purposes of these figures an offender is defined as someone who has been dealt with by police by means of one of the following outcomes: charge, summons, caution, discretionary disposal, penalty notice for disorder, having the offence taken into consideration at court and indictable only offences where no action was taken against the offender (died before proceedings or PPS did not prosecute) – for further details on crime outcomes see sections 2.6 and 2.7 of this user guide. Figures on offender characteristics, the victim characteristics of ethnicity/nationality and information on the victim/offender relationship were first collated in response to a specific request and so data is only available from 2010/11 onwards.

Victim characteristics are not available for domestic abuse incidents that have not resulted in a crime being recorded (see 2.1 for an explanation of what constitutes and incident and what constitutes a crime). This is mainly due to the proportion of such records for which victim characteristics are unavailable.

5.7.1.1 Victim Age

In relation to **domestic abuse crimes**, the age bands available are under 18 and 18+, with figures dating back to 2004/05. At a Northern Ireland level the crime classifications provided for each age band are violence with injury (including homicide), violence without injury, theft (including burglary), criminal damage, all other offences and total offences. Figures for each age band are also available for total offences recorded by policing district and policing area.

5.7.1.2 Victim Gender

In relation to **domestic abuse crimes**, those victims aged 18+ are further split into female aged 18+ and male aged 18+, with figures dating back to 2004/05. At a Northern Ireland level the crime classifications provided for these gender splits are violence with injury (including homicide), violence without injury, theft (including burglary), criminal damage, all other offences and total offences. Figures for these gender splits are also available for total offences recorded by policing district and policing area.

5.8 Publication

Annual data are published on a financial year basis, with the annual bulletin providing finalised figures for the latest financial year along with trends and commentary. Provisional incident and recorded crime data are published each quarter on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis. Provisional figures remain subject to change until the annual data are published. Provisional figures in each quarterly bulletin supersede those published in previous quarterly updates.

A publication schedule is available on the PSNI Internet site.

PSNI publications on domestic abuse incidents and crimes are available from the PSNI Internet site. This link also provides access to the latest quarterly updates and to annual reports dating back to 2004/05.

Bulletins on Experience of Domestic Violence: Findings from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey can be found in the Statistics & Research Publications section of the Department of Justice Internet site.

6 Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes

6.1 Hate motivation definitions
6.2 Data use
6.3 Data collection
6.4 Data quality
6.5 Data Management
6.6 Timeliness
6.7 Data Availability
6.8 Publication

As well as publishing figures on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data, PSNI also publishes data on those incidents and crimes which have a hate motivation. Figures relating to hate motivated incidents and crimes are not a National Statistics product.

6.1 Hate motivation definitions

The PSNI have adopted the definition for racially motivated incidents recommended by the Stephen Lawrence enquiry, namely 'Any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.' Additionally the PSNI also use the principles of this definition to record all types of hate incidents as listed below, along with their definitions:

Racist Incidents

A racist incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. A racial group can be defined as a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins (this includes UK National origins i.e. Scottish, English, Welsh and Irish) and references to a person's racial group refer to any racial group into which they fall. Racial group includes the Irish Traveller community.

Homophobic Incidents (sexual orientation)

A homophobic incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be homophobic by the victim or any other person. Homophobia can be defined as a fear or dislike directed towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people, or a fear or dislike directed towards their perceived lifestyle, culture or characteristics. Sexual orientation can be defined as an individual's preference for a particular sex (be it the opposite or the same), or an individual's view of their own sexuality.

Sectarian Incidents

A sectarian incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be sectarian by the victim or any other person. The term 'sectarian', whilst not clearly defined, is a term almost exclusively used in Northern Ireland to describe incidents of bigoted dislike or hatred of members of a different religious or political group. It is broadly accepted that within the Northern Ireland context an individual or group must be perceived to be Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist, or Loyalist or Republican.

Faith/Religious Incidents (non-sectarian)

A faith/religious incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the faith of the victim or so perceived by the victim or any other person. A faith or religious group can be defined as a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief. This would include Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and different sects within a religion. It also includes people who hold no religious belief at all.

Disability (or Disablist) Incidents

A disability related incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the victim because of their disability or so perceived by the victim or any other person. Disability can be defined as any physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Transphobic Incidents

A transphobic incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be transphobic by the victim or any other person. Gender should not be confused with sexual orientation. A transsexual is a person who has 'gender dysphoria' or dissatisfaction with his or her own birth gender. Transsexuals may be lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual and may or may not consider an incident perpetrated against them to be homophobic.

An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 2.1 Introduction to Police Recorded Crime. A crime will be recorded as having a hate motivation where it meets the

definition provided above. Not all hate motivated incidents will result in the recording of a crime as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a notifiable offence being recorded. Where crimes with a hate motivation are recorded they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics. The recording practices, methods of counting detections and crime types as described in Sections 2 and 3 apply equally to crimes with a hate motivation.

6.2 Data use

These statistics are used widely within PSNI as management information and to monitor performance on hate motivation related targets against the Policing Plan. The figures are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate and policy development regarding incidents and crimes with a hate motivation in Northern Ireland.

6.3 Data collection

Incidents and crimes with a racist or homophobic motivation have been collated by PSNI in their current format since 2004/05. Sectarian, faith/religion and disability motivated incidents and crimes have been collated since 2005/06. Incidents and crimes with a transphobic motivation have been collated since 2006/07. While PSNI compiled statistics on racist and homophobic motivations prior to 2004/05, the method of data collection and definitions of crimes and crime types was not comparable and so these figures are not made available by PSNI's Statistics Branch.

The system which was used by PSNI in 2004/05 for crime recording (the integrated crime information system or 'ICIS') was modified to enable incidents to be identified as having a racist or homophobic motivation. Where an incident was given this marker, each crime recorded within that incident was also identified as having a racist or homophobic motivation.

The current system on which crime is recorded, NICHE, was introduced from 1st April 2007. This system refined the process for recording crimes with a hate motivation in that the marker identifying an incident or crime as hate motivated could be applied to each incident or crime separately. In other words a crime which may have been recorded within an incident identified as hate motivated, but which did not itself have a hate motivation, would not have the hate motivation marker applied.

6.4 Data quality

While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, the identification of a hate motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of a hate motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, but audits and data quality checks are routinely conducted in an attempt to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.

6.5 Data Management

Statistics Branch has access to data which is extracted from the NICHE recording system on a daily basis. Automated processes ensure that the internal management information system and reports are updated each day. Access to these data extracts enables Statistics Branch to produce bulletins for publication and to respond to ad hoc requests for information.

6.6 Timeliness

A balance needs to be obtained between the requirement for figures to be as up-to-date as possible and the requirement to publish figures which are of appropriate quality and completeness for use. There is a lag of around eight weeks between the end of the quarter and publication of the quarterly bulletin to allow for routine data quality checks to be issued and competed by Districts.

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and remain subject to change until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. Final figures for the full financial year (presented as per the quarterly updates) are published around six weeks after the end of the financial year. This is to allow for additional quality checks to be completed on the data. The more detailed annual commentary and spreadsheet will be published in early July.

6.7 Data Availability

Information that is published in the quarterly and annual bulletins has been examined to make sure it meets levels of quality and completeness appropriate for publication. The proportion of records for which information is unavailable is identified in the bulletins and accompanying spreadsheets. There will be some variables held on the operational system for which the level of missing or incomplete information is too high to allow for inclusion in the bulletins, or where the data quality is not sufficient for publication.

Crime classifications are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced and also the length of time period covered. The confidentiality protection arrangements document on the PSNI internet site provides additional information on PSNI's arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data and statistical disclosure control.

Therefore any requests for crime classifications or types of data not included in the bulletins are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Where there is potential for placing additional data on the website, this will be taken forward.

Where there are requests for types of information that would require additional processes to be put in place for gathering this information, these will be forwarded within PSNI for a decision on whether there is a business requirement to collect information in this format.

6.7.1 Availability of Information Relating to Victim Characteristics

The Home Office has identified offences as being victim-based, state-based or victim and state-based. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. For victim-based offences, the victim can be a member of the public (referred to here as person victim), a police officer who was the victim of a crime in the course of carrying out their duty, or a business or organisation. The introduction of the NICHE system in 2007/08 has enabled a breakdown of crime by the type of victim to be provided from this date. Victim characteristic figures are available through the annual bulletins.

Victim characteristics are not available for incidents with a hate motivation that have not resulted in a crime being recorded (see 2.1 for an explanation of what constitutes and incident and what constitutes a crime). This is mainly due to the proportion of such records for which victim characteristics are unavailable.

Victim characteristics are also not available in relation to victims of faith/religion, disability or tranpshobic motivation as the number of person victims is too small to enable these details to be provided.

6.7.1.1 Victim Age

In relation to **racist, homophobic and sectarian crimes**, the age bands available are under 18, 18-64 and 65+. Figures date back to 2007/08 and are available at a Northern Ireland level and for total offences recorded.

6.7.1.2 Victim Gender

In relation to **racist, homophobic and sectarian crimes**, figures are available split by female victims and male victims, with the number of crimes where the gender is unknown also provided. Figures date back to 2007/08 and are available at a Northern Ireland level and for total offences recorded.

6.7.1.3 Ethnicity/Nationality

Figures relating to the ethnicity and nationality of victims are provided for crimes with a racist motivation and are available in the detailed annual bulletin (Table 2.5).

6.7.1.4 Religious Background / Sexual Orientation

The provision of these victim characteristics in relation to crimes with a homophobic, sectarian or faith/religion motivation is not possible due to the proportion of such crimes for which this information is either unknown or for which the victim refused to provide these details. Further information is available in the sections of the Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes in Northern Ireland annual bulletin which deal with information relating to victims.

6.8 Publication

Annual data are published on a financial year basis, with the annual bulletin providing finalised figures for the latest financial year along with trends and commentary. Provisional incident and recorded crime

data are published each quarter on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis. Provisional figures remain subject to change until the annual data are published. Provisional figures in each quarterly bulletin supersede those published in previous monthly updates.

A publication schedule is available on the PSNI Internet site.

PSNI publications on hate motivated incidents and crimes are available from the PSNI Internet site. This link also provides access to the latest quarterly updates and to annual reports dating back to the year the recording of each type of hate motivation started.

7 Geographic recording of crime

7.1 Policing areas
7.2 Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs)
7.3 Standard Geographic Areas
7.4 Data Availability

As a general rule crimes are geographically recorded by the police based on the location in which the incident occurred. Crime by location is currently presented in three main ways:

- by policing area and policing district (available through the PSNI Internet Site);
- by standard geographic area (available through the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System Internet Site: - Local Government District 2014, Local Government District, Assembly Area, Assembly Area (1998), Education & Library Board, Health & Social Services Board, Health & Social Care Trust and Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA).
- the police crime mapping website Crimemapper (see 7.2 below).

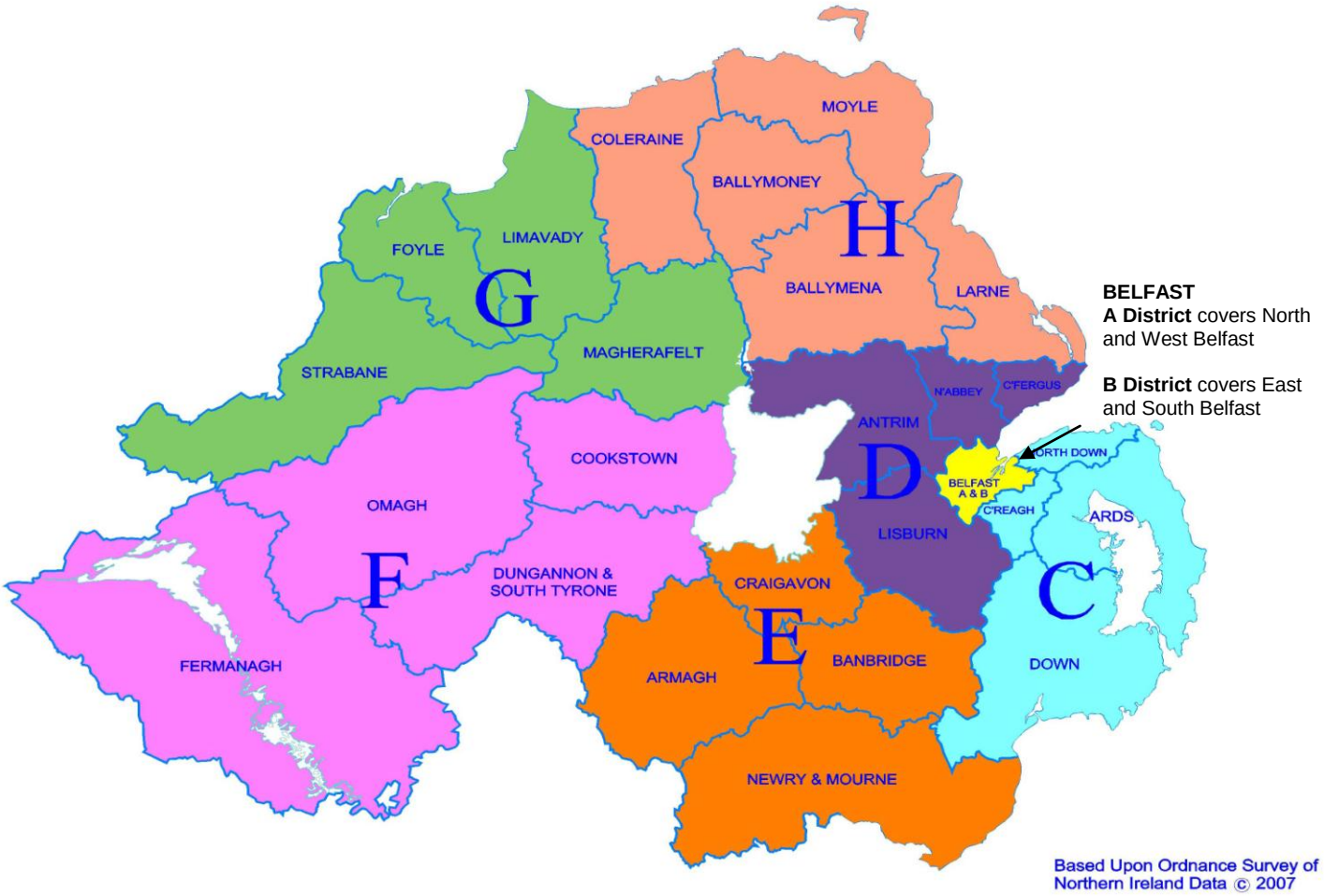
7.1 Policing areas

Policing areas are based on the local government district (LGD) boundaries for Northern Ireland that were in place before the new council boundaries were drawn up(LGD2014), with Belfast being split into East, North, South and West. Policing areas have then been grouped together to form the eight policing districts as shown in Figure 7.1 below

While the policing boundaries described in this section have changed since those in place in 1998/99, postcode information has been used to create a comprehensive data series based on the current boundaries.

Each crime record is allocated to a policing area at the time of recording. Crime figures within the current financial year are provisional and, at any one point in time, there may be a small number of crimes which have not yet been allocated to a policing area. However by the time the financial year figures are finalised, all crimes will have been allocated to a policing area.

Figure 7.1 Map of policing districts and policing areas in Northern Ireland



7.2 Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs)

Policing areas are split into smaller localities which are covered by Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Figures on crime and anti social behaviour by NPT are available through the police crime mapping website. This website enables users to find information on crime and anti social behaviour down to street level; it provides details of local NPTs and also facilitates the downloading of crime data. The figures on the crime mapping website will differ from those published in the monthly bulletins as they are extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.

7.3 Standard Geographic Areas

While all crimes are allocated to a policing area, there is no automatic allocation to other standard geographic areas. These allocations are done using the postcode attached to the address at which the crime occurred. However not all of these addresses contain a valid postcode and some addresses do not have a postcode at all.

Once crime figures have been finalised after the end of each financial year, work is undertaken by staff in Statistics Branch to improve the quality and completeness of postcode details. After this work is finished, more than 99% of records in the dataset have a postcode:

- postcodes which are obviously incorrect are removed from the dataset (eg where the policing area is identified as Belfast but the postcode places the crime in Newry and no alternative postcode can be identified);
- records where the postcode and the policing area fall close to the same geographic boundary but on different sides of that boundary are kept in the dataset.

The postcode is then used to allocate the standard geographic areas to each record in the dataset by a process of matching to the latest Central Postcode Directory (CPD). Summary crime figures for each geographic area are then compiled and disclosure control is applied whereby any cell with a value of three or less is replaced with a *. On occasion it is also necessary to replace cells with values above three with a * where not to do so would enable a value of three or less to be identified. The application of disclosure control is to avoid the disclosure of any personal information about an individual or organisation. Further details on disclosure control are available in the statement on confidentiality protection arrangements.

The completed files are then forwarded for updating on the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System (NINIS).

Due to the amount of work involved in compiling figures for these standard geographic areas, it is only possible to provide such updates once a year.

Please note: while there may be an expectation that crime figures by policing area and by the pre-2014 LGD boundaries would be the same, differences may be found for the following reasons:

- policing area is allocated at time of recording and is 100% complete, while LGD is allocated on the basis of postcode information which is 99% complete;
- the inclusion of records where the postcode places the record in a LGD neighbouring the allocated policing area.

7.4 Data Availability

The levels of geographic availability differ between recorded crime, incidents and crimes with a domestic motivation and hate motivated incidents and crimes. The geographic areas and crime classifications available are outlined in the sections below.

7.4.1 Data Availability for Recorded Crime

Annual bulletin – Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: the number of crimes recorded, along with crime outcomes and population rates per 1,000 population for each financial year dating back to 1998/99 and for each policing district and policing area, in addition to the Northern Ireland level.
Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: Monthly Update: the number of crimes recorded, along with crime outcomes for the current and previous 12 months, current and previous financial years to date and for each month over the last two years, for each policing district, policing area and Northern Ireland.
Figures in these bulletins are also available for the following crime classifications, in additional to total recorded crime – all offences:

Violence with injury (including homicide)	Theft from the person	Trafficking of drugs
Violence without injury	Vehicle offences	Possession of drugs
Sexual offences	Bicycle theft	Possession of weapons offences
Robbery	Shoplifting	Public order offences
Domestic burglary	All other theft offences	Miscellaneous crimes against society
Non-domestic burglary	Criminal damage	Other fraud

7.4.2 Data Availability for Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes

The spreadsheet which accompanies the annual bulletin Incidents and Crimes with a Domestic Abuse Motivation contains a pivot table which provides the number of domestic abuse crimes recorded, number of domestic abuse sanction detections, domestic abuse sanction detection rates and domestic abuse population rates per 1,000 population for each financial year dating back to 2004/05 and for each policing district and policing area, in addition to the Northern Ireland level. These figures are also available for the following crime classifications:

- Violence with injury (including homicide)
- Violence without injury
- Theft (including burglary)
- Criminal damage
- Breach of non-molestation order
- All other offences
- All Offences

The number of incidents with a domestic abuse motivation, along with rates per 1,000 population by policing district and policing area for each financial year dating back to 2004/05 are also available in this spreadsheet.

The above information is also available in the quarterly bulletins for the following time periods: the current and previous 12 months, current and previous financial years to date and for each quarter over the last two years. The only exceptions are that violence with injury (including homicide) and violence without injury are combined to provide an overall category of violence against the person, and that breach of non molestation order is not provided separately but is combined with all other offences.

7.4.3 Data Availability for Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation

The spreadsheets for racist, homophobic and sectarian motivations which accompany the annual bulletin Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes each contain a pivot table providing the number of hate motivated crimes recorded, number of hate motivated sanction detections, hate motivated sanction detection rates and hate motivated population rates per 1,000 population for each financial year dating back to the start of each data series and for each policing district and policing area, in addition to the Northern Ireland level. These figures are also available for the following crime classifications:

- Violence with injury (including homicide)
- Violence without injury
- Theft (including burglary) and criminal damage
- All other offences
- All Offences

The number of incidents with a hate motivation, along with rates per 1,000 population by policing district and policing area for each financial year dating back to the start of each data series are also available in these spreadsheets.

The number of incidents, recorded crimes and sanction detection rates for faith/religion motivations and disability motivations are available at policing district and policing area for each financial year dating back to 2005/06. These figures are not provided for crime classifications below the level of total crime.

The number of incidents and recorded crimes with a transphobic motivation are available at policing district and policing area for each financial year dating back to 2006/07. These figures are not provided for crime classifications below the level of total crime. Due to the low number of sanction detections for crimes with a transphobic motivation recorded each year; descriptive information is provided in the annual bulletin.

The above information is also available in the quarterly bulletins for the following time periods: the current and previous 12 months, current and previous financial years to date and for each quarter over the last two years. The one exception is that violence with injury (including homicide) and violence without injury are combined to provide an overall category of violence against the person.

7.4.4 Data Availability on NINIS

NINIS holds a range of crime and crime-related information in its Crime and Justice data theme and also in the Neighbourhood Renewal Community Well-being data theme.

7.4.4.1 Crime and Justice Data

Notifiable Offences Recorded	
Time Period Covered	Each financial year dating back to 2000/01
Geographic Areas Covered	Local Government District (LGD), Local Government District 2014 (LGD2014), Ward, Assembly Area 1998 (AA1998), Assembly Area (AA), Education & Library Board (ELB), Health & Social Services Board (HSSB), Health & Social Care Trust (HSCT) and Policing Area
Crime Classifications Available	*All geographic areas except ward:* Total recorded crime – all offences Violence with injury (including homicide) Violence without injury Sexual offences Robbery Domestic burglary Non-domestic burglary Vehicle offences Theft from the person Bicycle theft Shoplifting All other theft offences Criminal damage Trafficking of drugs Possession of drugs Possession of weapons offences Public order offences Miscellaneous crimes against society Other fraud *Geographic area of Ward only:* Total recorded crime – all offences Violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery Burglary Theft Criminal damage Drug offences All other offences *Less detailed crime classifications are available for ward level detail due to the smaller numbers involved, and to prevent the possible disclosure of the identity of an individual/organisation or any private information relating to them.*

Domestic Incidents and Crimes	
Time Period Covered	Each financial year dating back to 2004/05
Geographic Areas Covered	Domestic Abuse Incidents – Policing Area only
	Domestic Abuse Crimes - Local Government District (LGD), Local Government District 2014 (LGD2014), Ward, Assembly Area 1998 (AA1998), Assembly Area (AA), Education & Library Board (ELB), Health & Social Services Board (HSSB), Health & Social Care Trust (HSCT) and Policing Area
Crime Classifications Available	Total number of offences recorded with a domestic abuse motivation only

Hate Incidents and Crimes (those with a racist, homophobic or sectarian motivation only)	
Time Period Covered	Racist and homophobic - each financial year dating back to 2004/05 Sectarian – each financial year dating back to 2005/06
Geographic Areas Covered	Incidents with racist, homophobic or sectarian motivation – Policing Area only
	Crimes with racist, homophobic or sectarian motivation - Local Government District (LGD), Local Government District 2014 (LGD2014), Ward, Assembly Area 1998 (AA1998), Assembly Area (AA), Education & Library Board (ELB), Health & Social Services Board (HSSB), Health & Social Care Trust (HSCT) and Policing Area
Crime Classifications Available	Total number of offences recorded with a racist, homophobic or sectarian motivation only

Anti-social behaviour incidents	
Time Period Covered	each financial year dating back to 2006/07
Geographic Areas Covered	Local Government District (LGD), Local Government District 2014 (LGD2014), Ward, Assembly Area 1998 (AA1998), Assembly Area (AA), Education & Library Board (ELB), Health & Social Services Board (HSSB), Health & Social Care Trust (HSCT) and Policing Area
ASB Classifications Available	Total number of anti-social behaviour incidents only

7.4.4.2 Neighbourhood Renewal Data – Community Well-being

Notifiable Offences	
Time Period Covered	Each financial year dating back to 2000/01
Geographic Areas Covered	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
Crime Classifications Available	Total recorded crime – all offences Violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery Burglary Theft Criminal damage Drug offences All other offences

Domestic Abuse Crimes	
Time Period Covered	Each financial year dating back to 2004/05
Geographic Areas Covered	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
Crime Classifications Available	Total number of offences recorded with a domestic abuse motivation only

Hate Crimes (those with a racist, homophobic or sectarian motivation only)	
Time Period Covered	Racist and homophobic - each financial year dating back to 2004/05 Sectarian – each financial year dating back to 2005/06
Geographic Areas Covered	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
Crime Classifications Available	Total number of offences recorded with a racist, homophobic or sectarian motivation only

Anti-social behaviour incidents	
Time Period Covered	Each financial year dating back to 2006/07
Geographic Areas Covered	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
ASB Classifications Available	Total number of anti-social behaviour incidents only

8 Published sources of crime data and data comparability

Police Recorded Crime statistics for England & Wales, Scotland, Ireland and those for Northern Ireland are collected and published separately.

Police recorded crime figures for Northern Ireland can be accessed through the following sources:

- The crime statistics page of the PSNI internet site where bulletins and spreadsheets are published monthly and annually;
- Monthly updates are supplied to the police crime mapping website which provides street level recorded crime and anti-social behaviour data presented using a crime mapping tool. The raw data can also be downloaded from the website. The figures on the crime mapping website will differ from those provided in this bulletin as they have been extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.
- Data in respect of police recorded crime, anti-social behaviour and incidents/crimes with a domestic or hate motivation are updated annually on the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System (NINIS) website.

The Government Statistical Service recently compiled a UK Statistics comparability report which givens an overview of data comparability issues for the main theme groups, including crime & justice, across the UK. An indication of comparability is given in respect of the total number of crimes and the number of violent and sexual crimes from the police recorded crime data. This report can be access through the following link:
https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Comparability-Report-Final.pdf

The latest bulletins on Police Recorded Crime for England & Wales are available from the Office for National Statistics Internet Site. Bulletins on crime outcomes are available from the Home Office.

The latest bulletins for Scotland are available from The Scottish Government Internet Site.

The latest bulletins for Ireland are available from Central Statistics Office Ireland Internet Site.

Links to additional publications which contain recorded crime figures are provided below. Where national or international comparisons are made, differences in data collection methods and legislation between countries should be taken into consideration.

Regional Trends (Office for National Statistics)

Social Trends (Office for National Statistics)

Eurostat

European Sourcebook

United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends

Appendix 1 Recorded crime list

The classifications defined in this Appendix are those used for crimes recorded by the police and notifiable to the Home Office. In general, attempting, conspiring, aiding, abetting, causing or permitting a crime is classified under the heading of the crime itself, though in certain cases it is shown separately.

Recorded crime covers all indictable and triable-either-way offences. Additionally, a few closely associated summary offences are included. These offences are identified in the listing, together with the reasons for their inclusion. The crimes on this list are termed notifiable offences and their listing is referred to as the notifiable offences list (NOL).

Most of the offences listed are defined in terms of legal offences (i.e. sections of Acts). A comprehensive list of these offences, together with key legal definitions and explanatory notes, are available in the Home Office Counting Rules.

The numbering of each classification provided below follows the numbering of the crime classifications as displayed within the Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

Note: The offences and legislation in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime are based on those used in England & Wales. There will be differences in offences and legislation within Northern Ireland.

VICTIM-BASED CRIME

Violence against the person

Homicide

1. Murder
4.1 Manslaughter
4.2 Infanticide
Applies to infants aged under 12 months killed by the mother while of disturbed mind
4.10 Corporate manslaughter

Violence with injury

2. Attempted murder
4.3 Intentional destruction of a viable unborn child
Applies to the unborn child 'capable of being born alive'
4.4 Causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving
4.6 Causing death or serious injury by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs
4.8 Causing death or serious injury by careless or inconsiderate driving
5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm
(offences of grievous bodily harm with intent / wounding with intent)
5E Endangering life
(certain firearms/ammunition and explosives offences, administering poison etc with intent, endangering life at sea, endangering railway passengers and other use of substance or object to endanger life)
37.1 Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking
4.7 Causing or allowing death of a child or vulnerable person
4.9 Causing death or serious injury by driving: unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured driver
8N Assault with injury
Further split into grievous bodily harm (GBH) and wounding, assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH), assault on police with injury (Covers those assaults with an AOABH injury level but where the victim was a police officer. Where a police officer receives an injury more serious than AOABH, this will be recorded using the appropriate offence) and poisoning to aggrieve
8P Racially or religiously aggravated assault with injury
Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland

Violence without injury

3A Conspiracy to murder
3B Threats to kill
8L Harassment
Further split into Harassment and Intimidation (no exact match for intimidation offences in England & Wales)
8M Racially or religiously aggravated harassment
Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland
11A Cruelty to children/young persons
13 Child abduction
14 Procuring illegal abortion
36 Kidnapping
104 Assault without injury on a constable
Summary offences, closely associated with actual bodily harm (see classification 8N).
105A Assault without injury
Summary offences, closely associated with actual bodily harm (see classification 8N). Includes, amongst other offences, common assault and aggravated assault. From 1 April 2003 only includes assaults involving no injury, please note that this change was introduced a year earlier in England and Wales on 1 April 2002.
105B Racially or religiously aggravated assault without injury *(see classification 105A)*
Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland.

Sexual offences

Rape

19A-H. Rape
Is further split into rape and attempted rape

Other sexual offences

16 Buggery
Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
17 Indecent assault on a male
Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Is further split into age 17+ and age <17
17A Sexual assault on a male aged 13 and over
17B Sexual assault on a male child under 13
18 Gross indecency between males
Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
20 Indecent assault on a female
Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, is further split into age 17+ and age <17
20A Sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over
20B Sexual assault on a female child under 13
21 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 14
Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
21 Sexual activity involving a child under 13
22 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 17
Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
22B Sexual activity involving a child under 16
22A Causing sexual activity without consent
23 Incest or familial sexual offences
25 Abduction of a female
70 Sexual activity etc. with a person with a mental disorder
71 Abuse of children through prostitution and pornography
72 Trafficking for sexual exploitation
73 Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature
74 Gross indecency with a child
Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
88A Sexual grooming

88C Other miscellaneous sexual offences
88D Unnatural sexual offences
88E Exposure and voyeurism

Robbery

Key elements of the offence of robbery (Section 8 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969) are stealing and the use or threat of force immediately before doing so, and in order to do so. Any injuries resulting from this force are not recorded as additional offences of violence.

34A. Robbery of business property
Further split into armed robbery, ordinary robbery and hijacking.
34B. Robbery of personal property
Further split into armed robbery, ordinary robbery and hijacking.

Theft Offences - Burglary

Key elements of police recorded burglaries (as defined by the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969) are entry (or attempted entry) to a building as a trespasser with intent to either (a) steal property from it (including stealing or attempting to steal), (b) inflict grievous bodily harm or (c) commit unlawful damage to property whilst inside. The offence group also includes aggravated burglary (Section 10 of the same Act), which is defined as a burglary where the burglar is in possession of a weapon at the time. The Home Office Counting Rules contain details of the types of premises that constitute a dwelling.

Domestic burglary

28A Burglary in a dwelling
28B Attempted burglary in a dwelling
28C Distraction burglary in a dwelling
Not available in Northern Ireland, distraction burglary figures are included in 28A
28D Attempted distraction burglary in a dwelling
Not available in Northern Ireland, attempted distraction burglary figures are included in 28B
29 Aggravated burglary in a dwelling

Non-domestic burglary

30A Burglary in a building other than a dwelling
30B Attempted burglary in a building other than a dwelling
31 Aggravated burglary in a building other than a dwelling

Vehicle offences

37.2 Aggravated vehicle taking
Part of Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981. Applies to offences of unauthorised vehicle taking (see classification 48 below) with additional aggravating factors of dangerous driving, or causing an accident involving injury or damage.
45 Theft from a vehicle
48 Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicle
Unauthorised taking of motor vehicle (part of Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981; also known as taking without consent or TWOC) is a summary offence. It is closely associated with theft of a motor vehicle because at the time of recording it may not be known whether the intention is to permanently deprive the owner.
126 Interfering with a motor vehicle
Summary offences, closely associated with theft of or from vehicles. The Home Office Counting Rules contain detailed guidance for forces on distinguishing between these offences and criminal damage, where a vehicle is reported damaged.

Theft from the person

39 Theft from the person
Includes snatch theft, but if this involves the use or threat of force (e.g. if the victim resists), then it is recorded as robbery

Bicycle theft

44 Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle
Includes taking a pedal cycle without consent (Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981)

Shoplifting

46 Shoplifting

All other theft offences

All the offences listed here, unless shown otherwise, form the legal offence of theft (Section 1 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969), which is defined as a person dishonestly appropriating property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it.

40 Theft in a dwelling other than from automatic machine or meter
41 Theft by an employee
42 Theft of mail
43 Dishonest use of electricity
47 Theft from automatic machine or meter
49 Other theft or unauthorised taking
Includes, amongst other offences, unauthorised taking of conveyance other than a motor vehicle or pedal cycle
49A Making off without payment
35 Blackmail

Criminal damage

56A Arson endangering life
56B Arson not endangering life
Not all malicious fires that the police record are included here. If the owner of the property set alight is wounded, then a crime of violence is recorded. If a stolen vehicle is subsequently burnt out, it is recorded as a vehicle theft. An additional arson offence is recorded only if there is evidence that the arsonist is unconnected with the vehicle thief.
58A Criminal damage to a dwelling
58B Criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling
58C Criminal damage to a vehicle
58D Other criminal damage
58J Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage
Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland

OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY

Drug offences

Trafficking of drugs

92A Trafficking in controlled drugs

Possession of drugs

92B Possession of controlled drugs
(in use to 2003/04 only)
92C Other drug offences
Various offences, mostly under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, including permitting premises to be used for unlawful purposes; failure to comply with notice requiring information relating to prescribing, supply etc. of drugs; supply of intoxicating substance; and supply etc. of articles for administering or preparing controlled drugs.
92D Possession of controlled drugs (excluding cannabis)
92E Possession of controlled drugs (cannabis)

Possession of weapons offences

10A Possession of firearms with intent
10B Possession of firearms offences
10C Possession of other weapons
10D Possession of article with blade or point
81 Other firearms offences
90 Other knives offences

Public order offences

9A Public fear, alarm or distress
Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland
9B Racially or religiously aggravated public fear, alarm or distress
Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland
65A Violent disorder
(includes offences of riot and violent disorder)
66 Other offences against the State and public order
Further split into bomb hoax related offences, breach of anti-social behaviour order, breach of non-molestation order, breach of sex offender orders etc, offences under anti-terrorist legislation, other

Miscellaneous crimes against society

15 Concealing an infant death close to birth
26 Bigamy
24 Exploitation of prostitution
27 Soliciting for the purpose of prostitution
33 Going equipped for stealing, etc.
33A Possession of items for use in fraud
(includes making, supplying or possessing articles for use in fraud)
38 Profiting from or concealing knowledge of the proceeds of crime
54 Handling stolen goods
Section 21 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, dishonestly receiving etc. goods, knowing them to have been stolen
59 Threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage
60/61 Forgery or use of false drug prescription / Other forgery
61A Possession of false documents
67 Perjury
69 Offender Management Act
76 Aiding suicide
79 Perverting the course of justice
(includes intimidation or threat to harm witness etc, as well as perverting the course of justice)
80 Absconding from lawful custody
802 Dangerous driving
814 Vehicle/driver document fraud
These records comprise driving licences, insurance certificates, registration and licensing documents, work records, operators' licences and test certificates.
83 Bail offences
86 Obscene publications, etc. and protected sexual material
95 Disclosure, obstruction, false or misleading statements etc.
99 Other offences
(includes betting, gaming and lotteries; Customs and Revenue offences; Immigration offences; Public health offences; Trade descriptions etc and other indictable or triable-either-way offences)

Other fraud*

51 Fraud by company director
52 False accounting
53 Fraud by false representation etc
Further split into
53D Other fraud (not covered elsewhere including deception)
53E Fraud by failing to disclose information
53F Fraud by abuse of position
55 Bankruptcy and insolvency offences

* in England and Wales these crimes are not reported to Action Fraud